

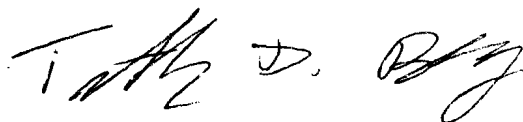
Daughter of the Religious Right: Coming of Age in Fundamentalist America

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

By

Rachel Fulton

Thesis Advisor
Dr. Timothy Berg

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Berg". The signature is stylized with a large "T" and "B".

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Finally, I would like to thank my parents for raising me with such love and support.

Preface (Abstract)

Congratulations: you are about to enter a world that is probably incredibly different from anything you have encountered before, a world full of large families, homeschool conventions, political involvement, and Christianity that does not compromise. You will meet political activists and national homeschool leaders, international students and children on fire to win America back for Christ. You will witness a fifteen-year-old teaching Latin to elementary school children and watch a homeschool father campaign for state office with a campaign team made up of high school and middle school students. I don't know how you will feel about the people you meet or situations you encounter, but I do know that you will learn a lot from this book, and that you will certainly not be bored.

I think that people often fail to realize how much of who they are is a product of their upbringing. In many ways, that is what this book has been about for me. I always knew that I was being raised differently from most Americans, and I was taught to be proud of that fact, but it was not until I reached college and stepped outside of everything I had known before that I realized that I had to look at things for myself and decide what I was truly going to believe. I began to see myself as a cultural specimen and began to truly evaluate the way I was raised.

What prompted this introspection? Part of it came naturally as I met people in college who were completely different from me and had been raised in completely different environments. The straw that broke the camel's back, though, was taking Global Studies with Dr. Berg in the spring of 2007. I was exposed there to another side of capitalism as I learned about the poverty the

global market has caused in third world countries, and I also learned another side of environmentalism, a side in direct opposition to what I had learned in high school. Dr. Berg helped me gain a more balanced view of American foreign policy that caused me to question the neoconservatism with which I had been raised. Suddenly I was reevaluating a lot of my political and economic beliefs, questioning assumptions I had always held and departing from the views of my father. What was happening to me? I had never, ever disagreed with my father, nor had I been raised to do so; my new thoughts, beliefs, and questions scared me.

The most important thing I learned from Dr. Berg's class was that my parents are fundamentalists. As I read about fundamentalism in assigned reading and participated in class discussion, I suddenly realized that I had been raised in this way. I shared this with the rest of the class, telling them that I had been raised as a Christian fundamentalist and that my parents had formed a counterculture to shield their children from the world. Dr. Berg told me later that he was impressed with my willingness to be so forthright about something this personal. Suddenly I asked myself - was being a fundamentalist a bad thing? I hadn't thought that it was, but now I was curious. I wanted to make sure for myself. This unleashed a mountain of reflection and research as I began to do everything I could to understand my upbringing.

The first thing that made my family different from normal was its size. I grew up as the oldest of twelve children. Mom and Dad placed an incredible value on raising us children, and we all loved our large, close family. Rather than watching TV, we children spent evenings gathered around Dad as he read aloud to us. In many ways, my family harkened back to a way of life in this country a hundred years ago.

coordinator of sorts and soon involved many of the homeschooled children in our community in the religious right as well. Dad's strong Christian values were incredibly important to him, and he carried these into politics. In fact, Dad made a bid for Indiana State Representative during the spring of my junior year of high school; we ran the campaign out of our house and my siblings and our friends comprised his campaign team.

These thoughts are all the results of my introspection over the last year. Besides the inherent differences in being raised in a family of twelve children, I had identified four movements that had a vast impact on my life; these were evangelical Christianity, Christian fundamentalism, the homeschool movement, and the religious right. Having understood this much about my family, my curiosity about my upbringing only increased. I soon set out to try to understand the history of the four movements that had made an impact on my life. I wanted to know if Christians had always been involved in politics, who Christian fundamentalists were, and if there had been evangelical Christians since the time of Christ or whether it was a new movement. I wanted to understand the history of the creation/evolution controversy and the history and people behind the homeschool movement. I began to do some research on these various questions and was soon fascinated by what I found. At the same time, I was scared. I didn't always like what I found, but I kept looking, and, as I did, I came to understand who I was and who I wanted to be better and better.

I then decided that I needed to write this all out. I had, years before, intended to write a book about my family along the lines of *Cheaper by the Dozen*, full of amusing stories and old-fashioned fun. I realized now, though, that I could fulfill this dream and help myself better understand my upbringing at the same time. No longer would this simply be an amusing tale;

Another thing that made my family different was the importance my parents placed on faith. Mom and Dad were evangelical Christians and God and the Bible influenced every detail of our lives. I grew up attending an evangelical megachurch, participating in its programs and ministries. God was the most important thing in the world to my parents, and being evangelical was engrained into me during my entire growing up experience.

My parents were not just evangelical Christians, though; they were also fundamentalists. Mom and Dad told us children that everything in our lives should be based on the Bible, and they lived like they meant it. They taught us children about the truth of Biblical Creation and warned us about the secular humanists and liberals they said controlled American society today. Mom and Dad sought to remove us children from the world, raising us in a counterculture where we only associated with people who shared our views.

Another thing that set my family apart was that my parents homeschooled my siblings and I. We grew up learning at the kitchen table and attending homeschool groups with friends. Homeschooling gave us the chance to be close as a family and to learn at our own paces; it also gave my parents the ability to handpick curricula that agreed with their beliefs and values and control who we knew and spent time with. Homeschooling gave me many opportunities normal children do not have; for instance, I studied Greek and Hebrew while I was in high school. In more ways than I can understand even now, being homeschooled had a huge impact on my life.

Finally, I was raised in the midst of the religious right. I grew up campaigning for conservative Christian candidates from an early age, and this political activism was incredibly important to my parents. My father became a political

instead, I would tell the story of important cultural movements through the experiences of my family. I hoped that maybe, just maybe, others would be interested in reading about my experiences and the movements they represented. I was suddenly looking at myself as a cultural specimen, and the budding historian in me felt compelled to put this all on paper.

And then I realized that I would soon have the opportunity to write an Honors Thesis. Suddenly I had a wonderful idea; I could write up my life as an honors thesis! I asked Dr. Berg, who had unknowingly caused my original introspection, to be my advisor, and I then set out on my huge project. I was going to write a book. I would make the story of my life available to all who wanted to read it and also have it for myself as a record for years to come. Suddenly, this was incredibly and undeniably important to me.

Writing this book has been cathartic. About the time I took Dr. Berg's class, I began to struggle with my relationship with my parents. I was starting to think for myself and question some of the things I had been raised with, and my parents were not pleased when I ended up disagreeing with them. By halfway through the following school year, I was being alternately yelled at and ignored by my father while my mother tried to use emotions and tears to control me. I myself was often reduced to tears. My father, with whom I had been incredibly close as I grew up, told me that he didn't want me to come home for Christmas break. This was all incredibly painful and bewildering to me. What was happening to my life? What was happening to my family? As I have gone through the process of writing this book, it has helped me to further understand my parents, their views, and my upbringing, and to more fully comprehend the struggles that I am having with my parents as I decide for myself what to

believe. This book has become a part of who I am as I work to further understand myself.

In addition, this book has consumed my life. I have spent hours upon hours researching and writing it this semester (I spent eighty hours on my book over spring break alone). I have written and written and written in an effort to put the emotion I feel down on paper. I want the people who read this book to understand the beliefs I was raised with, to feel what I felt growing up, and to be aware of the movements which have affected my life in so many ways.

Early on in the writing process, I continued to incorporate the amusing tales I had originally intended to compose my book of. Part of me still wanted to write an amusing novel, and I didn't think I needed only a straight analysis of my upbringing and the cultural movements involved. My first draft of my book, which was nearly four hundred pages long, was filled with entertaining stories about my family and humorous moments in my life. I turned it in to Dr. Berg to read and I thought that I was nearly done with writing it. I was wrong.

Dr. Berg returned my manuscript after a week, telling me that I needed to cut my book down to half the original size and cut out any stories that weren't pertinent to the four main themes of the story I was trying to tell. This needed to be a book about evangelicalism, fundamentalism, the homeschool movement, and the religious right as illustrated by my upbringing rather than simply an entertaining book about my family that incorporated those themes. Dr. Berg also told me that I needed to concentrate more on my analysis and on the history of my story. This was all hard to hear. My book had become my baby, and I did not want to change any of it; after all, I liked the stories and I liked the work I had done. Nevertheless, I took a deep breath and began revising my book.

Yet, in spite of my initial objections, I soon saw that Dr. Berg was right. Though I love all of the random stories about my family - and I may put them together in a book of short stories at some point - I needed to make the focus of my book clear. And so, I set about revising and rewriting, researching and analyzing, and creating something that was organized and to the point, something that truly reflected on the way I was raised and the movements my family was a part of. As I continued to research and revise, I found that the historical themes my story illustrated became clearer and clearer in my head as my understanding of them grew. I am extremely glad that I have dug deeper into the history of these movements and that I have spent more time truly analyzing my upbringing.

This book has grown, changed, and evolved as I have written it, but this book is me. It is the story of a girl and the story of four movements that coalesced in my family to impact my life forever. Through the process of writing this book, I have come to understand myself and my upbringing in much greater depth, and I will always be thankful that I stepped out and took this challenge. This book offers readers a glimpse into a way of life that is not at all normal, a way of life filled with belief and purpose, commitment and vision, a way of life greatly influenced by four important historical movements. Reading this book will open up another world, but it will do more than that. I have put my soul into this book, and I trust that it will shine through to any reader who cares to look for it.

Rachel Fulton

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INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1: Extra! Extra!

The Fultons are in the News

Mom set the phone down with a thud, a worried look on her face. "What's going on, Mom?" I asked her.

"Do you remember that reporter for the Evansville Courier and Press who wrote those articles slamming Hostettler last year?" she asked. It was the fall of 2003, and I was sixteen. Only a year before, during the election year of 2002, a reporter by the name of Roberta Hieman had written some very slanderous and untrue articles about our U.S. Congressman, John Hostettler. She got her misinformation into the newspaper, Mom and Dad told us, simply because she happened to be the editor's wife.

"Yes, I remember," I answered. I remembered campaigning for Hostettler that year; I had come up with a chant to counter Ms. Hieman's articles. It ended like this: "Do not listen to the Courier's lies. Roberta Hieman is the editor's wife, she's trying to fill the world with strife!" Dad didn't let us actually use this chant in any of the parades we marched in, because he wanted our focus to be more positive.

"Well," Mom continued. "That was a friend on the phone, and apparently that reporter, Ms. Hieman, is going to write an article on homeschooling. She can get anything she writes published, and you know how liberal people like her are about homeschooling. She's probably going to write some article slamming the homeschool community and calling for more regulation. She's not coming anywhere near me, I can tell you that!"

Little did Mom know what was in store for us. Ms. Hieman called various leaders in the homeschool community, gathering information and setting up interviews. One day Mrs. Taylor, who

was a close friend of Mom's and the co-president of SWIHE, the South Western Indiana Home Educators association, called Mom and told her that Ms. Hieman was looking for a homeschool father to interview regarding the role of fathers in homeschooling. Mrs. Taylor asked Mom if she could give Dad's name and number to the reporter, and Mom grudgingly assented. "Just so long as she doesn't get near me or in my house," Mom stipulated. When Dad found out about this interview, he was far from thrilled. He didn't feel comfortable talking to the press, especially as he felt vulnerable in front of a potentially hostile reporter; he was worried that she would twist his words as he told us so many reporters often did.

"You set it up for me to meet with her alone?" he asked. "Look, if I'm going to talk to her, I'd like to have some support. Why don't you come with me?"

"Jon, I told you, I don't want to talk to her," Mom replied, her voice full of feeling. "You can just meet with her and give her the father's perspective. I set up for you to meet with her at the library tomorrow night at seven."

"All right, I'll do it, but on one condition." Dad said finally. "I'm taking Rachel, Hannah, and Benjamin with me." I was sixteen, Hannah was fifteen, and Ben was thirteen; Dad figured that we would be able to impress Ms. Hieman, and also make it so that it wasn't just him meeting with just her.

The next day we arrived at the library at the same time that Ms. Hieman did, but there was one problem: the library was closed. Dad and Ms. Hieman talked, and they decided that we should all go to G.D. Ritzy's for ice cream and talk there.

"Rachel, how about you ride with Ms. Hieman?" Dad asked. *Wait, I thought. Me? Me ride alone with Ms. Hieman in her car?*

"Sure, Dad," I said aloud. I knew that Dad was trusting me. I knew that this was my chance to do my stuff - my chance to work my magic. I knew that I must not disappoint my father.

The whole way to Ritzy's, Ms. Hieman and I talked. She asked me questions about my favorite subjects and activities, and I just started talking. I told her about how I had studied Greek since I was fourteen, and about how I had just started learning Hebrew. I told her that I was in the middle of reading the Iliad, and that I was enjoying it immensely; it wasn't for school, either - I had just decided that I should read it, so I was. I told her about the Latin classes I was teaching for homeschool students, and about how I had studied Latin since I was seven. I told her about the homeschool groups I was in, about my responsibilities at home, and about life in a large family. By the time we arrived at Ritzy's, I had done my duty and fulfilled Dad's expectations: Ms. Hieman was impressed.

The five of us sat and talked over ice cream for three straight hours. Dad himself did very little talking, allowing the three of us children to show Ms. Hieman how well-rounded, well-socialized, and well-educated we were. She was especially amazed at the size of our family; after all, not many families these days have eleven children. She asked us lots of questions about what being in a family with eleven children was like for us (there would eventually be twelve children, but Mabel wasn't born until the summer of 2005, the summer before I left for college). At the end of the evening, Ms. Hieman had one last request.

"Could I send a photographer over to your house to take some pictures?" she asked us.

"Sure," Dad answered. "Just give us a call." Ms. Hieman took down all of our information and thanked us for our time. What Dad did not know was that we were the only family in the

homeschool community to say yes to pictures. He also did not know what Mom's response would be.

"You told her *what?!!*" Mom asked incredulously when Dad told her.

"I said she could send a photographer over for a few pictures," Dad replied. "He'll be here sometime early next week. It's no big deal; she just wants some pictures of our school setup, the kids doing homework, that sort of thing." Dad did not know, at the time, that he was wrong about that being all the pictures she wanted; that would come later.

"Jon, you should have asked me!" Mom protested. "I told you I didn't want anything to do with the reporter! Oh well, it's too late now. We're going to have to spend all weekend cleaning the house..." And we did. We cleaned and scrubbed and scoured and washed and organized; our house looked brand new by Monday morning, and we were worn out.

Enter the photographer. He was really a very nice man, with two young children of his own. He first came on a school morning and wandered the house for an hour or two taking pictures. He told us to just ignore him. He got pictures of kids studying in the learning room, Mom teaching kids at the kitchen table, us older ones studying on our own in our rooms, the smallest children playing, our science lab setup, the little girls holding the twin babies, and on and on. By the time he left, we were feeling like celebrities. He wasn't gone for good, though.

The photographer came back one evening that week to get a specific picture; Ms. Hieman wanted a picture of all thirteen of us eating supper. She was fascinated by the fact that we all ate supper together every day, all at one big table. The twins were, at the time, too small to eat real food, but that didn't exclude them; they always joined us at the table anyway, and we children fought over who would get to hold each of them while we ate.

Still, though, the photographer was not done. Hannah, Ben, and I found ourselves stalked at our weekly homeschool music group, followed around and photographed like celebrities. All of our friends looked at us strangely and asked us questions. We explained as best as we could, and hoped the photographer would stay mostly out of the way. Our friends all knew about the planned article on homeschooling, of course, so no one was actually upset about it.

There was a fourth shot that Ms. Hieman wanted; the photographer followed us to church that next Sunday. He got pictures of us eating breakfast before church, pictures of us in our huge van driving to church, and pictures of us worshiping in church. It was a little awkward to have the photographer taking pictures of us in the middle of the church service, but we just pretended he wasn't there and he only stayed long enough to get the shots he needed.

With that, we were done with the photographer. He was a nice guy, though. The boys introduced him to their new twist on the game of tag. I never learned the rules, so I of course don't remember them now, but I know that the game involved shooting rubber bands at other players in the basement in the dark. My brothers came up with the strangest things. The photographer also enjoyed watching the little girls hold and care for the twins. We were confused as to why Ms. Hieman wanted so very many pictures of us, but we were soon to find out.

We got a phone call one Saturday a few weeks later telling us that we would be in the newspaper the next morning. It was good that we were alerted, because we didn't get the local paper, the Evansville Courier & Press, even on Sundays; my parents felt that it was too liberal to waste money on. Before church that Sunday morning, though, Dad went off to get a copy

of the newspaper for us to read, but we were not prepared for the shock we would soon feel.

The entire article was about us: we were the front page feature story with a full spread of pictures. The paper's headline was "Homeschooling: 11 Children keep teacher-parents busy," and there was a big picture of some of us children studying at the kitchen table right on the front page. The article was quite long, and started with the words "By any academic measure, 16-year-old Rachel Fulton would surely score well above average. She is learning Hebrew, is teaching Latin to 23 students, is translating the New Testament from a Greek Bible and, 'for fun,' is reading 'The Iliad.' But that's just part of the remarkable story of one of Jonathan and Betsy Fulton's 11 children...This really is a family that plays together, prays together, goes to the library together, plants a garden together, sits at a table and eats dinner together and seems to always be learning together."

We were completely taken aback. Never in our wildest dreams had we imagined that the story would be all about us, and we could hardly believe how positive the article was! There wasn't a single derogatory word against homeschoolers; on the contrary, the article was filled with praise for the wonderful opportunities available for homeschoolers, and for my parents and their ability to raise and teach eleven children themselves. We were overwhelmed, but my parents' first reaction, as always, was to thank God for answering our prayers for a positive article.

We walked into church (almost made late by reading and rereading the article) feeling like celebrities and heroes. Our friends came up to us and offered congratulations, and complete strangers walked up to us and told us how impressed they were. Several people told us that they were shocked by how much praise

a reporter who was usually so liberal had heaped upon us. I felt like I was shining and floating, and that feeling didn't leave me for a very long time.

For months after the article came out I felt like it was following me around. A random stranger would approach me in the library and ask me if I was the daughter who did laundry or the daughter who cooked, or someone would stare at me while I was perusing a bookstore and finally come up to me and ask if Hebrew was difficult. It was weird, but I loved it; only one thing was uncomfortable, and that was the feeling of being watched and stalked. But then, I was rather used to that. After all, who wouldn't stare at a family with eleven children?

Chapter 2: Who We Were

A Look at the History of My Family

I grew up in a family that was both evangelical and fundamentalist Christian. I was homeschooled, and my entire family and all of our homeschool friends were extremely involved in the religious right. My family was part of a cultural movement that continues to this day, and this makes me a bit of a cultural specimen. The story of my upbringing sheds light on evangelicalism, fundamentalism, homeschooling, and the religious right, and, as such, I have decided to tell it. What are these movements and where did they come from? Who are these people and how do they think? I have my own answers to all of these questions.

It was not until I went away to college that I was able to step outside of my upbringing and evaluate it for myself, and it was several more years before I decided to seek to understand the background behind the beliefs and movements in which I was raised. I no longer believe everything my parents taught me growing up, but the point of this book is not to explain what I do and do not believe but rather to give the reader a window into the world in which I was raised. I have grown through this process as researching and writing this story has helped me to better understand who I am and why. First, though, before I tell the tale of growing up in the midst of these beliefs and movements, I need to introduce my family.

My father was born in 1963 and grew up in Massachusetts. Some of his ancestors were pilgrims who came to New England on the Mayflower, and others were Scotsmen who arrived in the Americas during the 18th century as they fled English domination. Dad was the second of eight children, seven boys and then a

girl, and his father was a self-employed carpenter. Though they lived in Hingham, a wealthy suburb of Boston, Dad and his family had to work hard to make ends meet. Dad's father drilled a strong work ethic into his sons, and Dad and this was something my father never lost. His family worked together to build their house themselves on a stretch of farmland. At school, Dad and his siblings did not always fit in with the other students very well, and Dad ended up forming his own group of friends out of the school misfits. In this way, he influenced the lives of many of his peers and began a legacy of selfless service to others. Dad did well in school and went on to attend the Naval Academy in Annapolis. He received his degree in mechanical engineering, graduating in the top ten percent of his class, and then went to Florida to study nuclear power in preparation for going into submarines.

Though Dad grew up in the a Congregationalist church in New England, he began attending a Baptist church when he was in high school, and it was then that his relationship with Jesus became the most important thing in the world to him. Dad's faith grew until it was the driving force behind him. It's not surprising, then, that he met my mother while at a Bible study while he was in nuclear power school in Florida.

Mom was born in 1964 and grew up in Michigan; she had one older brother and one younger brother. Her father was in the Air Force, but he retired while she was still young and took a job in computers at Whirlpool. Mom's ancestors were English and Scottish and have been in the United States since before the American Revolution; in fact, one of Mom's ancestors was a Methodist circuit rider who moved to Indiana in 1811. Mom grew up in middle class suburbia, and her parents raised her in a small Baptist church in which they formed part of the leadership. Christianity truly began to mean something to my

mother when she attended a church camp while in middle school; it was there that she realized that being a Christian meant dedicating every part of her life to Christ. After that, Jesus meant everything to my mother. Mom was very talented, being able to sing, play the piano, and sew, and she put those talents to good use as she played the piano for Christian music groups and sewed costumes for church events. Mom received a degree in nursing at a nursing school in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and then moved to Florida, where her grandparents and aunts lived, and found a job there. It was while she was in Florida that Mom met Dad at a Bible study.

Mom and Dad met in December and were married the following August. Dad admired Mom's life and spontaneity and Mom admired Dad's stability and dependability; also, they shared the same strong faith and a common vision for life. As I grew up, Dad instilled my siblings and I with a desire for education and a strong work ethic, while, at the same time, Mom provided us with creativity and tender love. If Dad was the brain of the family, Mom was definitely the heart.

Over the months that followed their wedding, Mom and Dad moved around as Dad continued his nuclear power training. I was born while they were in Connecticut, and, soon afterward, we moved to Washington State, where Dad was stationed in the Navy. Hannah and Benjamin were born while we were living there. Dad got out of the Navy when I turned three, saying that he wanted to spend more time with his family. We moved in with his parents in Massachusetts, but this turned out to be only temporary, and, the month I turned four, we moved to Evansville, Indiana, where Dad acquired an engineering job at ALCOA. Mom hadn't held a job since she married Dad, and, with me and my two small siblings to care for, she continued her career as a stay-at-home mother after we moved.

Evansville is in southern Indiana, right on the Ohio River. It was founded in the early 19th century and bares the nicknamed "River City." The first thing Mom and Dad noticed about Evansville when we moved there was the family friendly atmosphere. Evansville was a city of a hundred and twenty thousand people, but we always found that it had the feeling of a small town. Evansville is an important hub of trade and has a stable, healthy, diverse, and growing economy, complete with manufacturing, health care, finance, and distribution industries. Evansville has water parks and a zoo, two major universities and an airport, historic areas and museums, but most of all it has friendly people with strong values and beliefs.

Compared to Massachusetts, Indiana is politically and theologically conservative, and that pleased my parents a lot. Dad disliked liberal theology and had a great affinity to conservative politics as embodied by Ronald Reagan. Evansville is part of the "Bible Belt," and there seems to be a church on every street corner. There was one road I remember calling "Church Road" simply because there were so many churches located along it. My parents, who had just spent a year living on the East coast where even three children makes a family large, loved Evansville and loved Indiana. They found a church to attend early on and began making connections in the community.

My parents raised us children to share their values. They homeschooled us and brought us up within the group of people formed by our church and the homeschool community. The homeschool community in Evansville is large and vibrant; there are literally thousands of children being homeschooled in the area. I have to admit that, growing up, I never socialized with anyone who was not either from our church or from the homeschool community. Therefore, when I speak of my "community," I mean

this community of homeschoolers and fellow church goers, not the Evansville community at large. I should point out that though our church community and the homeschool community overlapped a lot, they were in no ways synonymous. There were many homeschoolers who attended different churches from us, and there were many people who attended our church but did not homeschool. In any case, it was in this community, fraught with Christianity, family values, and conservatism, that I was raised.

The church in which I grew up was predominantly white and predominantly middle class, and the homeschool community in Evansville was the same. Practically everyone my family associated with was white. We had a family from our church with a white mother and a black father over for dinner twice, and there was a Korean family in our Bible study for a time, but these were aberrations. Because Evansville was settled in large part by German Catholic immigrants, I grew up around a large Catholic population; yet, at the same time, because our church was Protestant and the homeschool community in Evansville was, with only a few exceptions, Protestant as well, we only associated with Protestants. My family, then, nearly without exception associated only with conservative white middle class Protestants. I should point out, though, that my parents were not racist and that they don't look down on those who are poor. In fact, my parents made a point to teach us children that everyone is equal. Also, if they came across a family that was in need, Mom and Dad did what they could to help out. For instance, my family watched a boy named Joshua every Saturday for several years without charging because his grandmother, who was raising him alone, had to work. Yet the reality was that, because my family associated almost exclusively with those from our church and the homeschool community, I grew up only knowing

conservative white middle class Protestants, who also, because of our strong involvement in our church and in the homeschool movement, happened to be religious and family oriented. This, then, was the community in which I was raised.

When we first moved to Evansville, my family spent a year living in apartments before moving into a house my father had built on land he had bought. Our new home was in the middle of a cornfield just north of town, not far from our church. Over the years, Dad did what he could to develop and improve our five and a half acres, and we soon had a pond, a track, extensive gardens, plenty of trees, an orchard, a baseball field, and an amazingly wonderful playground out back. Thus, my siblings and I grew up in veritable wonderland for children, and we and all of our friends loved it.

As I have mentioned, there were twelve children in my family when it was complete, and I was the oldest. The point of this book is not to give you a thorough understanding of each of my siblings, but I'll provide a bit of an introduction to them here. My sister Hannah was born soon after me, and though I was generally hard working and academically focused, Hannah was laid back and artistic. After the two of us girls came three boys, Benjamin, Jeremiah, and Josiah. Ben was a lot like me, Jeremiah was always full of questions or off inventing something, and Josiah was happy-go-lucky and loving. After the three boys came four girls, Grace, Mercy, Patience, and Charity, the last of whom was born the summer before I started high school. Grace was a leader and very creative, Mercy was a tender hearted dreamer, Patience was shy but always helpful, and Charity was everyone's darling and little mother. This brought the number of children to nine. Then, when I was halfway through high school, twin boys, Micah and Gideon, were born, and finally, the summer before I started college, Mabel brought the number of children

to twelve. That summer before I left for college, our names and ages went as follows: Rachel, 18; Hannah, 17; Ben, 15; Jeremiah, 13; Josiah, 11; Grace, 9; Mercy, 7; Patience, 5; Charity, 4; Micah and Gideon, 2; and Mabel, newborn. These, then, were my siblings.

We spent a lot of time together as a family. In evenings in the winter we would all gather around while Dad read aloud to us and in evenings in the summer we would weed in the gardens and then all go for a swim. We ate nearly every meal together, and we children never lacked for playmates. My family was always extremely close, and I loved it.

Because of the size of our family, we children always had a lot of chores. During my first two years of high school, for instance, I was in charge of all of the laundry for the family, and during my last two years of high school I was in charge of all of the cooking. Everyone had chores, even children who were only two or three years old; we had fun together and we also worked together, and sometimes the two overlapped. Really, we children didn't usually mind all of the work we had to do. In fact, at one point when I was in middle school we children went to Mom and Dad and offered to do more chores in return for them having another baby; they took us up on the offer.

This, then, was my family. The point of this book is to use the backdrop of my family and experiences to highlight four cultural themes in this country today: evangelicalism, fundamentalism, homeschooling, and the religious right. I have therefore divided this book into four sections. The first section looks at evangelical Christianity, tracing its history and looking at my family's involvement in it; the second section then examines the history of fundamentalist Christianity and how it has impacted my family. The third section looks at homeschooling, both explaining its history and common components

and looking at my family's experience with it. Finally, the fourth section of this book deals with the religious right and my family's intense participation in it. In each section, the first chapter will trace the history of the movement in question and the rest of the section will look at how this played out in my family and experiences. I will then end this book with a chapter that traces my senior year of high school, my college search, and my leaving home for the first time. I hope that you find this book fascinating, enjoyable, and informative.

PART 1:

EVANGELICAL

Chapter 3: Our Faith was Alive

A History of Evangelical Christianity

"Mommy, I want to ask Jesus into my heart," I told my mother one day when we were in the kitchen and I was only four.

"That's nice, Rachel," she responded absentmindedly.

"Can you help me to it?" I asked.

"No, Rachel, wait until you understand better. You're only four," Mom said, looking at me with a smile.

"Please, Mommy?" I begged.

"Rachel, let me make supper, okay?" Mom replied with a sigh. "Go play with your sister."

"Fine," I said, sticking out my tongue as I left the room. I didn't think I was too little; I was already four, after all. That night after supper I went upstairs and knelt by my bed. There was no one else in the room, and I was supposed to be getting my pajamas on. I felt I had something more important to do.

"Dear Jesus, I know I'm a bad person. Please be my savior so that I won't go to hell. I want you to come into my heart." I knelt there by my bed quietly, my hands folded and my head bowed. Finally, I stood; I wanted to tell someone. I looked at the vent on the floor. We were living in apartments in Evansville, having only moved there five months before, and I knew that, if I yelled into the vent, Dad, who was in the kitchen cleaning up, would hear me.

"Dad!" I called, crouching on the ground, my face to the vent. "Dad, Jesus is in my heart!"

"Rachel, is that you?" Dad called back.

"Yes," I replied. "Jesus is in my heart!"

"Really? How do you know?" Dad wanted to know.

"Because I just asked him to come into my heart!" I answered with confidence.

My parents were evangelical Christians, and my conversion experience fit right into evangelical beliefs and practices. Though my parents had been concerned that I was too young to have a true conversion experience, they were thrilled with my acceptance of Christianity once they were convinced that I was truly sincere. This event, they believed, had saved me from hell and made me a Christian, and it was the beginning of my walk with Christ. The evangelical beliefs my parents lived and taught did a lot to influence me as I grew up, and I will never forget the things that I was taught. In the next few chapters, I will explore the influence of evangelicalism on my family and on the way I was raised, but first I'm going to take a moment to explore the history of the evangelical movement.

It is important to differentiate here between evangelical and fundamentalist Christians. I have stated that I was raised in both traditions, and this is true. The reason is that fundamentalists are also evangelicals; historian George M. Marsden says that "a fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something."¹ Fundamentalists are, in effect, extremely conservative, anti-modernist evangelicals. Evangelicals themselves tend to be more theologically conservative, rejecting the liberal theology of the mainstream protestant denominations,² but the evangelicals who are not also fundamentalists generally avoid extremes or militancy. In this section, I will examine evangelical Christianity, and then, in the next section, I will look specifically at the beliefs of the fundamentalist wing of evangelicals.

¹ George M. Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 1.

² Nancy T. Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 1991), 2.

What, then, is an evangelical? Marsden defined evangelicals as "people professing complete confidence in the Bible and preoccupied with the message of God's salvation of sinners through the death of Jesus Christ."³ David Bebbington, an expert on the history of evangelical Christianity in Great Britain, recognized four consistent features of evangelicalism throughout its history: conversion, Biblicalism, activism, and crucicentrism.⁴ Conversion involves a true, heartfelt, personal experience with the divine, Biblicalism is a faith in the Bible as one's only guide, activism involves spreading the gospel message to others and/or working to improve society, and crucicentrism is an understanding of the centrality and primary importance of Christ's death on the cross as the one act that brings salvation to humanity. Evangelicals, then, are Christians who believe that the Bible is their most important guide and that they, through personal conversion and faith, are saved by Christ's death on the cross alone. They also place a great importance on spreading the gospel message, the message of salvation through Christ, to everyone around them.

Evangelical Christianity began with the Protestant Reformation in the beginning of the 16th century, but term "evangelical" was eventually used to refer to the revivals of the 18th and 19th century English-speaking world.⁵ At this time, religion in the American colonies was dominated by the Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians.⁶ These denominations emphasized church membership, made use of highly educated clergy, charged money for using the pews in their church buildings, and delivered sermons full of theology and

³ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 3.

⁴ Agnus M. Gunn, *Intelligent Design and Fundamentalist Opposition to Evolution* (Jefferson, NC: MacFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2006), 45.

⁵ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 2.

⁶ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776 – 1990* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 54.

doctrine. In contrast to this, there was a general yearning in America in the beginning of the 18th century for a "true religion of the heart."⁷ The 1730s and 1740s, especially the years 1739 to 1742, saw a time of great religious revival in the colonies; this movement has come to be known as the First Great Awakening.⁸ This revival came about under the preaching of Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, George Whitefield, and others⁹ as they traveled through the colonies using charismatic preaching and a moving message to bring people to personal conversion and lead them to live lives founded on the gospel.¹⁰ This message spread like wildfire throughout the colonies and thousands of lives were transformed through personal experiences with the divine.¹¹ It was George Whitefield, one of the most influential preachers in the history of Christianity, who dominated this movement, attracting crowds numbering in the tens of thousands.¹² The First Great Awakening led to a large increase in the membership of the denominations that accepted and fostered it, especially the Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians.¹³

The Baptists and the Methodists were relatively new denominations, but they were characterized as being of the people, denominations of lay pastors and heartfelt preaching. Following the American Revolution, America was increasingly a religious free market, and there were winners and there were losers. In the years between 1776 and 1850, the Congregationalists and the Episcopalians were the main losers and the Baptists and the Methodists were the main winners.¹⁴ The

⁷ Mark A. Noll, *American Evangelical Christianity: A Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 10.

⁸ Finke and Stark, 87.

⁹ Monique El-Faizy, *God and Country: How Evangelicals have become America's new Mainstream* (New York: Bloomsbury, USA: 2005), 54.

¹⁰ El-Faizy, 54.

¹¹ El-Faizy, 54.

¹² Finke and Stark, 49.

¹³ El-Faizy, 56.

¹⁴ Finke and Stark, 72.

point here is not to look at any one denomination, but rather on the increasing success of evangelicalism, with its emphasis on personal salvation and the centrality of Christ's sacrifice, in the United States during these years.

The Second Great Awakening, which occurred from roughly 1800 to 1830,¹⁵ brought great success to the Baptists and the Methodists. This was a period of local revival meetings,¹⁶ and it involved this same emphasis on personal conversion that was evident in the First Great Awakening.¹⁷ The greatest preacher of the Second Great Awakening was Charles Finney.¹⁸ As spiritual renewal spread across the country, revivals that had been predominantly urban suddenly became rural with the advent of the "camp meeting."¹⁹ These camp meetings, which were held in the open air in the country and often lasted several days, attracted thousands of country folk. At the revivals of the Second Great Awakening, conversions were expected to be accompanied with soul searching and emotion; they were life changing events which brought individuals salvation. A first person account of one of these revival meetings stated that sometimes a person would, "with a piercing scream, fall like a log to the floor, earth or mud, and appear as dead...from a sense of the danger of their unconverted children, brothers or sisters...I have heard them agonizing...and speaking like angels to all around."²⁰ This emphasis on the conversion experience and personal salvation remains a hallmark of evangelicalism.

Another thing that both Great Awakenings stressed was the centrality of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, and the helplessness of man apart from the saving blood of Jesus. All

¹⁵ Finke and Stark, 87.

¹⁶ Finke and Stark, 89.

¹⁷ El-Faizy, 57.

¹⁸ El-Faizy, 57.

¹⁹ Finke and Stark, 92.

²⁰ Finke and Stark, 95.

humans, evangelicals believed, were hopeless and unable to do anything to bring about their salvation; it was only through a personal conversion to Christianity and an acceptance of Christ as savior that a person could be saved. Mary MacDonald, an evangelical Christian living in South Carolina, urged her twelve year old daughter in a letter in 1814 to "believe in Jesus, go to him and say, 'Thy word teacheth me...that I am a lost undone creature by nature and I have added and made myself more vile by practice...Holy Father I ask in Jesus Name that faith which shall purify my sinful wicked heart.'" ²¹ In addition to emphasizing the importance of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, evangelicals place a lot of importance on "Biblical supremacy," ²² believing that the "final authority for all matters of Christian faith and practice." ²³ Even as revivalists emphasized "simple Biblical preaching," ²⁴ the first half of the 19th century saw the advent of Bible societies which focused on making Bibles accessible and spreading Bible tracts in an effort to make use of print and literacy to spread the truth of Christianity and God's Word. ²⁵

Activism, Bebbington's fourth characteristic of evangelicals (along with conversion, crucicentrism, and Biblicalism), was also very present in the birth of evangelical Christianity, especially in the wake of the Second Great Awakening. Evangelical Christians in the middle of the 19th century campaigned for temperance with a vigor, desiring to improve society and bring about Christ's kingdom. These reformers put fire in the anti-slavery movement, worked to end prostitution, and reformed prisons and asylums for the mentally

²¹ Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 3-4.

²² Gunn, 45.

²³ J. I. Packer, *Fundamentalism and the Word of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1958), 75.

²⁴ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 2.

²⁵ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 12.

ill.²⁶ This emphasis on bringing about social reform was called the "social gospel." In addition, evangelicals at this time continued to focus on bringing about revival and spreading the gospel to all. Interested in saving the "heathen," evangelicals worked to further overseas missions to places like Africa and China.²⁷ In all of these ways, evangelical Christians were active in doing what they saw as the work of Christ on earth.

About the time the 20th century began, evangelicals in America increasingly found themselves split in two. In her book *God and Country*, Monique El-Faizy defined this split well: "the social gospel advocates, who were more liberal theologically, adopted liberal politics and emphasized social reform and responsibility; those who were theologically more conservative adopted conservative politics and emphasized revivalism and an individual responsibility for one's own salvation."²⁸ This split was also seen in distinct differences in eschatology, or beliefs about the end of the world.

more liberal Christians, as they focused on the social gospel, were generally postmillennialists,²⁹ which meant that they believed that they were to build the kingdom of Christ on earth, and that their efforts at sharing the gospel and improving society would usher in the end of the world and the coming of the millennial kingdom of Christ, a thousand years of peace and prosperity. They therefore went about combating poverty, ignorance, and crime as America underwent rapid industrialization and change.

The more conservative Christians, though, emphasized personal salvation and felt that the Christians who focused solely on the social gospel were letting material concerns

²⁶ El-Faizy, 57.

²⁷ Gunn, 47.

²⁸ El-Faizy, 58.

²⁹ Paul Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 99.

distract them from seeking to save and purify souls. These conservative Christians were generally premillennialists.³⁰ Premillennialism had only existed since the beginning of the 19th century, but it involved the belief that the world would become worse until a "rapture" of all Christians to heaven occurred, followed by seven years of great tribulation and, finally, Christ's triumphant return to earth and the thousand year millennial kingdom. These conservative Christians, then, generally didn't see much point in any activism besides that of saving souls. In fact, Rueben Torrey of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles said in 1913 that only the return of Christ would resolve the "political problems and social and commercial problems that now vex us."³¹

Christianity was split between these two camps. Though evangelicals were generally fairly conservative, there were also a good number of them who were liberal or moderate. This split often took place within Christian denominations themselves as liberals and conservatives battled for control. Many of these conservative evangelicals became militant in the first few decades of the 20th century and came to be known as fundamentalists.³² Fundamentalists gained national prominence in the 1920s as they battled against modernization and liberal theology. By the end of the decade, though, it was clear that the fundamentalists had lost, both in the public forum and within their own denominations. It was the liberals who won the battle for power within the main protestant denominations, and fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals were left without a voice. Only fifty years after this defeat, though,

³⁰ Boyer, 93.

³¹ Boyer, 95.

³² El-Faizy, 62.

evangelicals and conservatives were thriving while the mainstream liberal denominations were declining steadily.³³

After 1930, some conservative evangelicals, especially fundamentalists, left the major denominations to form their own, Bible-based, denominations while many others, still hoping to bring about change from within, remained within the major denominations.³⁴ The conservative evangelicalism of 1930 was pulled in two directions, separatist and inclusivist.³⁵ The strictest of the fundamentalists were very separatist, removing themselves from not only the major denominations but also from modern culture while other conservative evangelicals, along with some fundamentalists, were more inclusivist, willing to work with others across denominations and theological lines to work for the salvation of souls. It is out of this more inclusivist branch of fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals that the modern evangelical movement, which truly came to life in the 1970s, was born.

Even as separatists withdrew from society, inclusivists, made up of both fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals, began using radio broadcasting and an emphasis on youth as it sought to bring revival back to America.³⁶ Charles E. Fuller began his "Old-Fashioned Revival Hour" in 1931,³⁷ and by the early 1940s, it had the largest radio audience in the nation.³⁸ J. Elwin Wright of New England Fellowship was especially vocal in his desire for national revival, and, in 1942, he and several others who shared his desire held a national conference that gave birth to the National Association

³³ Marden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 64.

³⁴ Marden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 66.

³⁵ Marden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 66-7.

³⁶ Joel A. Carpenter, "From Fundamentalism to the New Evangelical Coalition," in *Evangelism and Modern America*, George Marsden, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984), 10.

³⁷ Carpenter, 11.

³⁸ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 68.

of Evangelicals, which, by 1947, represented thirty denominations and 1,300,000 members.³⁹ Under the leadership of fundamentalist pastor Carl McIntire, separatist fundamentalists had founded the ardently separatist American Council of Christian Churches in 1941,⁴⁰ so the inclusivists' founding of the National Association of Evangelicals a year later naturally angered the separatists. In fact, many separatists denounced the National Association of Evangelicals and declared "neo-evangelicalism" to be their "most dangerous enemy."⁴¹ The founding of these two rival associations of churches, one inclusivist and one separatist, gave an institutional form to the growing split between the groups that would become modern evangelicals and modern fundamentalists.⁴²

The inclusivist organization with the greatest success during this time was Youth For Christ, which was founded by a pastor named Torrey Johnson in 1945 and, within its first year, held 900 rallies and had one million constituents.⁴³ The organization chose Billy Graham, a young graduate of Wheaton College, to be its first full-time evangelist.⁴⁴ Graham was extremely influential as he spread the evangelical message across the globe;⁴⁵ in fact, he had such amazing success that Marsden defined the evangelical in the 1950s and 1960s as "anyone who likes Billy Graham."⁴⁶ In 1956, Graham established *Christianity Today*, naming his co-worker Carl Henry as its editor.⁴⁷ These inclusivists, made up of fundamentalists and

³⁹ Carpenter, 12-13.

⁴⁰ Carpenter, 12.

⁴¹ Carpenter, 13.

⁴² Nancy T. Ammerman, *Bible Believers* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 7.

⁴³ Carpenter, 15.

⁴⁴ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 69.

⁴⁵ El-Faizy, 69.

⁴⁶ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 6.

⁴⁷ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 73.

other conservative evangelicals, have thus given rise to the modern evangelicalism we see in the United States today.

It was the 1970s, though, that truly saw the ascendancy of evangelicalism; in fact, *Newsweek* named 1976 "the year of the evangelical."⁴⁸ This was based in part on evangelicalism's "affirmative disposition and sense of identity."⁴⁹ The evangelical movement benefited from the turmoil of the 1960s in several ways. First, the 1960s brought about a questioning of authority, and this lent itself to the evangelical movement with its individual responsibility and distrust of the establishment.⁵⁰ Second, evangelicals capitalized on the "people-community impulses" of the period as they focused on small-groups, Bible study, and fellowship.⁵¹ Finally, evangelicalism also gained from "the deep reactions against counterculture ideals" as many people saw "the protests of the young" as "a more virulent sort of Godless secularism and lawlessness."⁵² In this way, the 1960s created social conditions which gave birth to the evangelical resurgence of the 1970s, a resurgence which is still present today. In the 1970s and 1980s, evangelicals constituted one-third of the U.S. population, and in the 1990s they constituted a full half.⁵³

It is important to remember, though, that evangelicals are in no way truly united. They agree on the essentials of evangelicalism - usually defined in some way equivalent to Bebbington's four characteristics, conversion, Biblicalism, crucicentrism, and activism - but they are otherwise composed o

⁴⁸ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 63.

⁴⁹ Leonard I. Sweet, "The 1960s: The Crisis of Liberal Christianity and the Public Emergence of Evangelicalism," in *Evangelism and Modern America*, George Marsden, ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1984),

⁵⁰ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 104.

⁵¹ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 104.

⁵² Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 104.

⁵³ Gunn, 48.

backgrounds as diverse as Mennonites, Nazarenes, and Southern Baptists.⁵⁴ In addition, evangelicals disregard the idea of the institutional church, seeing the individual as sovereign to move from church to church in search of what is most convenient.⁵⁵

Since their resurgence, evangelicals have flourished as they built their own subculture, creating their own bookstores, radio stations, and movies. Yet even as they have their own subculture, evangelicals, unlike fundamentalists, remain within mainstream American culture. In more recent years, evangelical leaders like Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback, an influential mega-church in California, and author of the extremely popular book *The Purpose-Driven Life*, have helped to continue the popularity of evangelicalism.

Part of what has led to the enormous success of evangelicalism up to the present day is its ability to adapt to its cultural surroundings.⁵⁶ In *God and Country*, El-Faizy examines the way that contemporary evangelical churches attract and keep the people who attend. Today's evangelical churches, especially a growing number of mega-churches, attract people using contemporary music, catchy and moving sermons, support groups, classes, programs for children, and a variety of service opportunities. Though the opportunities of the numerous smaller evangelical churches are more limited, they can still provide their congregations with a tight community. In short, evangelical churches today provide America's ever moving population with friends and fellowship, and a community and support network that can, depending on the church, mean everyday

⁵⁴ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 65.

⁵⁵ Marsden, *Understanding Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism*, 81.

⁵⁶ Sam Reimer, *Evangelicals and the Continental Divide* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 25.

involvement.⁵⁷ In today's culture, belonging to an evangelical church like this can be extremely attractive.

This, then, is a very brief history of evangelicalism in the United States. Many people can identify with some aspect of this movement, and virtually every American at least knows of it. Though evangelical Christianity has gone through many changes over the years, one thing that has remained constant is its adherence to belief in conversion, Biblicalism, crucicentrism, and activism. My parents were involved in the evangelical resurgence of the 1970s, and they raised my siblings and I squarely within the modern evangelical movement. Though my parents also embodied many of the beliefs and practices of the fundamentalists who remained separatist, they were also clearly a part of modern evangelicalism, and the beliefs and practices of evangelical Christianity influenced nearly every aspect of our lives.

⁵⁷ El-Faizy.

Chapter 4: Our Place of Worship

Christian Fellowship Church

Christian Fellowship Church (CFC), which my family began attending when I was four, was a true Evangelical church. In addition to providing an amazing community and support network, CFC held firmly to Bebbington's four characteristics of evangelicals. At CFC, we were told that we each needed to have a personal conversion and a personal walk with Christ; we were learned that salvation only comes through Christ and that his sacrificial death was central to all of history. Also, CFC was what Mom and Dad called a "Bible based church;" Pastor David preached the Bible and the Bible only. Mom and Dad often told us that the denomination of a church didn't matter so long as it was founded on the Bible. Finally, CFC placed great importance on spreading the gospel; we needed to tell everyone around us, to touch everyone's lives with the truth of salvation. We were proud to call ourselves evangelical.

My parents loved CFC, and we children did too. We all had friends at church and loved the atmosphere there. Indeed, CFC was as much our home as our house in the middle of the cornfield was. Yet, getting all of us children dressed and ready for church on Sunday mornings was no easy task. It was like getting an aircraft carrier underway, but we went through it faithfully each week.

"Everyone come to the table!" I called one Sunday morning when I was fifteen. I hollered this message down the stairs to the basement where the boys' room was located, and then up the stairs to the girls' rooms on the second floor. It was twenty minutes after eight, church started at nine, and no one had had breakfast yet. I was somewhat bossy, I suppose, but I was

definitely motivated and hard working, and it often fell to me to make sure that the kids where they were supposed to be when they were supposed to be. A few moments after I had called my siblings for breakfast, I heard steps on the basement stairs and Ben, age twelve, appeared.

"Ben, good, thanks for coming," I said, glad for assistance. "Can you help me bring the chairs in?" Dad had mopped, as he always did on Sunday mornings, and the chairs were still in the living room.

"Sure. Hey, Jer!" he called downstairs to his ten-year-old brother. "Could you come help us here?" Soon all the chairs were around the table, and the table itself was covered with cereal, milk, spoons, and bowls.

"Come on, everyone!" I called out again. "Come sit at the table unless you want to go to church hungry!" Josiah, age eight, finally joined his brothers in the kitchen, and the little girls began coming down from the second floor, where Mom had been getting them dressed. As children sat at the table, I began serving the cereal.

"Eat, guys, we don't have much time," I said, looking around the table. "Hey! Grace, why isn't your hair done?"

"It is," she replied. "I brushed it myself; I'm old enough now." Grace was six, and she thought that made her pretty big.

"Grace, your hair is a mess," I said.

"It is not!"

"Yes it is," I assured her. "I'm going to go get a hair brush." I hurried upstairs and then returned with a hair brush, a pony tail holder, and a bow; I began to fix Grace's hair as she whined in protest.

Mom soon came downstairs with Charity, the baby, and Dad joined us as well, having just finished showering. By quarter of nine, we were all in the car and on our way. CFC was only a five

to ten minute drive, and Mom and Dad tried hard to make sure we were not late.

"Alright, everyone, hop out of the car and let's head in to church," Dad said as soon as the car was parked. One by one, then, we all piled out of the car and, grabbing the little ones' hands, headed across the parking lot and into the church.

CFC loomed ahead of us with its huge new sanctuary, built only recently. The sight was impressive when you consider that David Neidnagel, CFC's senior pastor whom we called "Pastor David," had started CFC in a rented room in an office building only twenty-five years before. During the first year, attendance was around forty. As the congregation grew, Pastor David moved them from place to place to find room, finally building an actual church when the congregation numbered in the hundreds. When my family first started attending CFC in 1991, attendance was nearing a thousand. Over the years, though, the congregation continued growing, and the church leadership finally initiated a plan for a new building. This was carried out around the time I began high school, which was when Charity was born. The church gym and learning center remained the same, but the old sanctuary became a chapel, the foyer was enlarged, new classrooms were added, and a huge new sanctuary was constructed. The new sanctuary, with its stadium-style seating, fit well over a thousand people, and the church held three services each weekend. CFC also now had a bookstore, an enlarged library, and even a small café.

As we walked into the large foyer, we were greeted by friendly church members and the sight of a large wooden cross. We walked through the foyer and then entered the sanctuary, making our way to the front just as the music began. We always sat in the very front row on the left side; we'd done that in the old sanctuary too. We took up the entire row as all of us

children sat down with Mom and Dad for what we called "big church." Most parents at CFC did not bring their children into the service, dropping them off at Sunday school instead. Mom and Dad, though, felt strongly that we should worship together as a family.

"Welcome to the Lord's house today!" the music leader called into a microphone. "We're so glad you're here to worship with us on this beautiful morning. The sun is shining, and this is the day of the Lord. Please rise and worship with us!"

Everyone stood as the music rose. I set two-year-old Patience, whom I had been holding on my lap, down beside me as I stood. The drummer on stage began rapping out the beat, soon joined by a piano and two guitars. The worship team, a group of singers with microphones, was also on stage as everyone began to sing.

We sang praise chorus after praise chorus, and the whole sanctuary was filled with music as people poured out their hearts, clapped in time with the music, and sang with feeling. After just short of half an hour, Mike Deeg, the executive pastor, came onto the stage for announcements and prayer.

"Thank you all for coming out today!" he said. "I'd like to start by letting you know that there is a ministry fair in the foyer today. I'd encourage everyone to sign up for at least one opportunity to serve. You may not feel comfortable, for instance, being a host family for an international student, but maybe you could donate some goods for Impact ministry's annual auction to benefit the poor in the inner city, or help in a Sunday school class for a semester, or volunteer to shovel the paths around the church when we get snow. I would just like to encourage you to find something to do to serve others, and we have plenty of opportunities. There's a flier in your bulletin today that has a list.

"Also, if you'll look in your bulletin for this as well, there are some new classes coming up this semester. The Beautiful Feet class for missions minded adults will be studying the needs and situations of countries in Asia this semester, and there is a new support group available for single mothers. As always, make sure to look through your bulletin for upcoming events and opportunities.

"One last thing; the Winslows are back from the mission field in Kazakhstan, and they will be holding a reception in room 112 during the second service this morning. Be sure to stop by and let them know that you're supporting them.

"And now, let's take a moment to go before the Lord. Heavenly father, you know our wants and needs, and you have designed us to serve others. Help us to find fulfillment in you alone. Lord, I would pray that everyone here could be connected in this church in some way, and not just attending weekly services. Help us all to learn more about you every day. In your son's holy name, amen."

After the announcements came the offertory. The worship team led us in singing another two songs while ushers passed around offering plates. When the songs ended, Pastor David walked onto the stage and stood before the podium.

"My message today is a simple one, but it is important. I want to share again with you what I call 'the great swap.' You see, I want to emphasize to you that it is not what we do that gets us to heaven, but what Christ did on the cross. We were all covered in sins and spiritually dead while Christ was perfect and righteous. Then, through his death on the cross, his righteousness was put onto us and our sin was put onto him. This was the great swap. In his death, Christ paid for all this sin and has, at the same time, given us his righteousness."

Because the sanctuary was so large, there were giant screens on the walls on either side of the stage; these screens showed Pastor David as he spoke, and also showed illustrations he sometimes used. The screens were now showing a picture of Jesus and an ordinary man, illustrating how the swap worked.

"This is important because many Christians today think that they need to do something to get to heaven," Pastor David continued. "They think that they need to say a number of prayers, or go to church enough times, or do more good than bad, and that that will get them to heaven. They couldn't be more wrong. Those who spend their lives trying to get to heaven through their works will someday find themselves damned. Rather, it is those who trust in Christ alone as their savior will be saved.

"It is also important to remember that Christ wants to have a relationship with us. He doesn't care about the ritual or about formulaic prayers; instead, he wants to get to know each one of us personally. This is not about religion, it is about a relationship with God. It is about a God who was willing to come to earth as a man and die for our sins, a God who loved us that much."

Pastor David spoke more about what we could do to come closer in our relationships with Christ, using many scripture references as he did so. After he had talked for about a half hour, Pastor David brought his sermon to a conclusion.

"Now, before we go, we are all going to take a moment to remember Christ's sacrifice, to remember his death on the cross; we are going to take communion. For those of you who are new here, we at CFC take communion every couple of months as a way to remember Christ's death on the cross. The crackers and grape juice remain just crackers and grape juice; there is nothing special or magical about them. This is a time, though, to

examine your life and what you have been doing right and wrong, to confess that to God, and to remember all that he has done for you. Remember, too, that only those who are Christians are invited to partake of this with us."

The worship team came out on stage and began to sing another song as ushers passed trays with cracker bits and small plastic cups of grape juice back and forth through the rows of seats and each person took a cracker bit and a tiny cup of grape juice. Evangelical Christians generally do not believe that there is any significance to communion besides its serving as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice on the cross. Because of this, communion is sometimes not taken any more often than once every few months; in addition, there is usually no special ceremony or process when children take their first communion. In my family, Dad simply decided when one of my siblings understood the gospel well enough and then allowed that child to take communion the next time it was offered. After the trays had been passed through the entire congregation, Pastor David read the words of Jesus at the last supper, and we all ate our cracker bits and drank our grape juice together.

After communion was finished, the worship team led us in a final song and the service was over. Everyone stood and began talking or headed to the gym for donuts or to a class for the second service. Some of our friends joined us in the front of the sanctuary and we all stood around and talked for a while like we usually did. The boys talked about their war games and we girls talked about our homework or the next tea party we were hosting. Our parents talked about the ministry fair, their small group, and homeschool activities. It was a good time of socialization.

We had to be careful, though, to make sure that we did not lose track of the smallest children during this time. Little

Charity, as she got bigger, liked to bolt and run, losing herself in the crowd in the foyer, and Micah and Gideon, the twin boys born after Charity, loved to climb the stairs by the baptismal pool and put their hands in the water. The baptismal pool was located to the side of the stage in the front of the sanctuary, and baptisms were held there during regular services from time to time, just as communion was.

CFC practiced "believers' baptism" as is typical of evangelical Christians, who generally see baptism as only a sign, an outward statement that an individual is identifying as Christian. Because of this, evangelical Christians forgo infant baptism and only baptize understanding believers, hence the term "believers' baptism." CFC actually often baptized people who had been baptized as infants, especially those who were raised in the Catholic Church; CFC held that these infant baptisms didn't count because the person being baptized had no say in it.

I was baptized at age seven. I had been a Christian for three years, and had decided that I wanted to be baptized. Though most baptisms were held in the baptismal pool in CFC's sanctuary, there were also occasional baptisms in a nearby lake, and that is how I chose to be baptized. I gave a short testimony to the dozens of people who had come to witness the baptisms that day, telling people that I was a Christian and a follower of Christ. Then, with Pastor David standing by, Dad baptized me in the lake "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Everyone applauded and Pastor David gave me a baptismal certificate, which was then signed by witnesses.

Though Pastor David did not practice infant baptism, he did allow for the dedication of infants. This meant that a couple could stand before the congregation and tell them that they intended to raise their new child as a Christian. Pastor David prayed for the child's salvation and gave the couple a candle to

burn on that day every year following to remember that that baby was dedicated to God. Usually, several couples would come up to dedicate their new babies together on the same Sunday.

As the second service started, Mom and I took the middle kids to children's choir; Dad took the very littlest children to their Sunday school classes and went to the church library with the older children to read while Mom and I helped out with children's choir. Sometimes Dad and the other older children volunteered in Sunday school classes during the second service, but this varied from semester to semester. Children's choir was held in the choir room behind the stage. I had been in children's choir until I was too old for it, but I loved it so much that I decided to be a helper for it rather than leaving it altogether. Mom was the pianist, and there had been Fultons holding parts in the children's choir spring musical since I was seven. When second service was over, we all met in the children's choir room and headed for the van, leaving the large church building with its new sanctuary behind.

Just as CFC's building was huge, so was its congregation. With nearly four thousand people attending regularly, it would be easy for people to get lost in the crowd. In order to make sure that people were still connected to each other, to ensure that there was a true community of believers, Pastor David instituted the formation of "small groups." These were groups of five or six couples who would come together in their homes regularly for Bible study and prayer. The goal was that these groups would grow together in Christ, bringing accountability and providing help when any of the families was in need.

My parents were in charge of one of these small groups; it met in our house every other week as we children played and the adults studied the Bible and prayed together. Our small group usually included a good number of homeschool families, and this

meant that there were plenty of children. We children loved it, because it meant that we got a change to see our friends. Generally, Hannah and I and the other older girls ended up babysitting the smaller children, but we usually didn't mind. Our small group also met together for seasonal parties and picnics. In this way, we were a community of believers worshipping God and living life together. I think our small group truly functioned the way CFC intended small groups to function.

Though there were many wonderful things about our church, CFC also had its drawbacks. It was a mega-church, and there were both good things and bad things about this. Like many other mega-churches, CFC was able to offer programs and service opportunities that smaller churches couldn't offer, yet, my parents didn't like the way it separated families in worship, sending the children to Sunday school and the adults to the actual service. They also felt that CFC was being run like a business, run to bring in more people and keep them rather than merely to help people in their relationships with God. Mom and Dad sometimes told us children that they felt that many of the programs, like the special youth groups and the short term mission trips (free family vacations, they called them), were merely there to please and entertain.

Yet my parents' biggest problem with our church seemed to be its worship style. Mom and Dad told us children that they wanted to sing traditional hymns rather than contemporary worship songs, both because of the history of these hymns and because they were full of doctrine which they said the "feel-good" choruses sung at CFC were lacking. Dad often mentioned the dearth of hymns on Sundays after church, and on the rare Sunday when two or more hymns were actually sung, we all rejoiced. Dad felt so strongly about the importance of this issue that he

wrote letters to CFC's pastors (there were several) and finally actually took the issue before the board of elders. Dad was called a troublemaker by those in church leadership, and Pastor David finally sent him a letter telling him that by challenging authority in this way he was teaching his children, by his example, to be rebels.

My parents thought several times about looking around at other churches, but each time they seemed to come back to the soundness of Pastor David's preaching. They considered starting a home church, and indeed there were Sundays when Mom and Dad chose not to go to church, and we, as a family, read and discussed scripture and sang hymns. This usually, though, only happened if our van was out of commission or a number of children were ill. In reality, my parents loved our evangelical mega-church in spite of their qualms, and we children did too. This, then, was the church in which I grew up. It was big, it was evangelical, and I loved it.

Chapter 5: Preaching the Gospel Abroad

International Students and Overseas Missions

"But you worship three gods, don't you?" asked Khalid as he sat on the couch in our living room.

"No, like I said, it's only one God," Dad replied.

"But aren't there three?" Khalid continued.

"God has three parts: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. But, he is still one God," Dad assured him.

"Father, Son, Spirit - that sounds like three gods to me," Khalid said, still unconvinced.

"No, it's one in three parts," Dad said again.

"Three parts. That's *three*," Khalid responded again.

I stood and walked into the kitchen. I was giving up on our game of Chinese Checkers. After all, would Dad and Khalid ever finish this discussion? I didn't think they would. At eleven, I was old enough to understand the conversation and find it interesting, but then, I could only take so much. I walked into the kitchen where the other kids were snacking with Abdullah, who, having no interest in the theological debate taking place, had left the living room even earlier than I.

Abdullah was showing the other children some spicy snacks he had brought for the evening; he loved to cook, so we got to taste lots of Kuwaiti food. We, in turn, introduced Abdullah to our family favorites: kissling cookies, chili cheese popcorn, and Mom's amazing potato soup.

CFC had a ministry in which they paired international students from the University of Evansville with host families from the church. The reason CFC - and my parents - felt so passionately about reaching out to non-Christian people with the gospel was that they believed that, without this message, people

would be damned to hell. CFC hoped that if they could share Christianity with international students, these students would not only find salvation themselves, but would also take the gospel back to their families and friends in their countries of origin.

Evangelical Christians put a big emphasis on activism, and CFC offered a range of ways for those who attended to get involved. Some of this activism was focused on the Evansville community; my family was involved in this as we donated extra clothing to homeless shelters, helped Impact, an inner city ministry, put on a fundraising auction, and volunteered at a fundraiser for a local rehab center. Most of the activism my family was involved in, though, was missions related, like our ministry to international students.

The international students CFC partnered with generally didn't live with their host families, but rather simply spent time with them to further learn about American life. For the host families, the idea was to not be pushy about sharing the gospel, but rather to live it and to answer questions if asked. That was what Dad was doing with Khalid in the living room before a half-finished game of Chinese Checkers.

Yet, most of the time we spent with these students was not so theologically charged. There was, for instance, the time we took Abdullah, our international student, and his friend Ali apple picking with us when I was around twelve. Abdullah and Ali spent the morning helping us pick apples from the trees, something they had never done before in their lives. This was one of the aspects of having international students that I most enjoyed. My parents worked to bring our international student into our day-to-day lives, and he played with legos and built forts with us children, helped with gardening, and went swimming in our pond with us.

Abdullah was our international student for five years. Though he didn't actually live with us, we saw him several times a month. After we'd known him for about three years, Abdullah's family came to Evansville to visit him. We were all excited to meet them, and Mom had the perfect dinner planned: chicken pot pie and green beans. Unfortunately, as the afternoon wore on that day and their arrival approached, Mom realized that she was running out of time. I could tell that Mom was getting stressed out; I was about thirteen at the time.

"It's okay, Mom; I'll make supper for you," I offered.

"Are you sure?" she asked.

"Yes, Mom, it's fine," I assured her. "I can do it."

"What are you going to make?"

"Oh, I think I'll make pizza," I replied.

"That sounds good," Mom said. "It's a real American meal. I'll throw together a salad."

"Okay," I replied, and started bustling about the kitchen. I loved cooking, and pizza was my specialty. I used to make it every single Friday night, and I always did this completely from scratch. As Mom ran around doing last minute things like cleaning the house and straightening the kids, I began making the pizzas. I found some frozen pepperoni - we all loved pepperoni - and set about covering all of the pizzas in it. I had just gotten the pizzas into the oven and Mom had just thrown the salad together when Abdullah and his family - his mother, father, two sisters, and brother - walked through the door.

Dad and the men sat in the living room and talked, and the women stood in the kitchen area talking with Mom about her school supplies and homeschooling in general (which they found very interesting). As I took the pizzas out of the oven, one of Abdullah's sisters suddenly looked concerned.

"Does the meat on that pizza have any pork in it?" she asked.

"Yes, it does." Mom responded. "Oh wait - that's a problem for you isn't it?"

"We don't eat pork. It is against the Koran."

"Rachel," Mom turned to me, her face full of embarrassment. "Do all of the pizzas have pepperoni on them?"

"Um...yes," I replied slowly. "I'm sorry!"

"It's not your fault," Mom assured me. "I was going to cook supper. I knew. Ladies, I'm really sorry about this. I can't believe I forgot!"

The women looked like they were in shock.

"Mom, I can take the pepperonis off of some of the pizzas," I offered. "Will that work?"

"No, I'm afraid not. There would still be the oil from it on them." Mom looked like she was lost. "I know what we'll do," she finally said with resolution. "There is still the salad." She turned to the women standing in the dining room. "There is plenty salad to make a meal, and it's a very hearty salad."

At that, the women looked relieved. I myself still felt mortified. With all my studies, I should have remembered that Muslims don't eat pork! I felt even worse later that evening when our guests revealed the presents they had bought for all of us: scarves for us girls and little robes for the boys. If I remember correctly, I went to my room soon after the gifts were opened and didn't come back.

Interestingly, that was probably around the time I started to feel out of place around international students. In retrospect, I think this had to do with the fact that I was fast going through puberty and most of the international students we had over to your house were college aged men.

When I was sixteen, Abdullah's twenty year old brother, Sultan, came to live with us for three months. He slept in the basement on the extra bed in the boys' room. Though everything was completely appropriate, it still felt awkward to me; I was sixteen, after all. The boys, though, loved Sultan, and so did the little girls. The boys were always asking him questions, seeking his advice, or showing him their creations and experiments, and the little girls were always climbing all over him and begging for him to read books to them.

In addition to ministering to the international students attending universities in Evansville, CFC also spent a lot of time and money supporting missions overseas, both long term missions and short term missions trips. They felt that reaching out to those in other countries with the gospel was one of the most important things that we could do. Overseas missions are of paramount importance to Evangelical Christians, and this had a big impact on my life as I grew up praying for missionaries, meeting missionaries when they were home on furlough, and understanding that Mom and Dad felt that missions work was incredibly important. For as long as I can remember, my parents led us in prayer for missionaries and for the conversion of nonbelievers in foreign countries, especially for those living in what Mom and Dad called spiritually dark Muslim countries. We had a book called Operation World which outlined the missions needs of all of the countries in the world and offered us ways to pray for them.

In addition to prayer, my family also supported overseas missions financially. Every year, my parents gave over ten percent of what they earned to God, part directly to CFC and part to the many missionaries we supported. Mom and Dad believed that if we were willing to tithe our money to God in this way, he would bless us even more.

My parents made a point to spend time with missionaries when they were in the United States on furlough, and that meant that my siblings and I often played with "missionary kids." I especially remember playing with the Winslow girls when I was small, and we children all became very close to the Nelson children as I grew older. The Nelsons were missionaries to Hong Kong, and they had eight children, including a girl close to my age.

In total, CFC supported nearly two dozen missionary families full time, and they also sent people on short term missions trips. When I was fifteen, I actually went on one of these short term missions trips myself. At the time, I was hoping to be a missionary nurse when I grew up, so finally going on a missions trip was thrilling.

For years, CFC had been supporting a pastor and his family in Bolivia along with a project to develop an agricultural high school to improve the lives of the people there. The Grimms, who were the couple in our church in charge of spearheading the project on our end, went down to Bolivia twice a year and often took church members with them. I was just fifteen, so I was thrilled when my application to go on a mission trip with them was accepted. I couldn't wait. One reason I was allowed to go along was to help take care of Bolivian children while their parents were in meetings regarding the agricultural school.

In some ways, going to Bolivia was like a great vacation. We stayed for the first few days in a home for missionaries on their way in and out of the country. While we were there, we got to explore the city of Santa Cruz and I was allowed to ride in the back of a pickup truck through the busy streets. There were new sights, sounds, and tastes all around me; I was having the time of my life.

In other ways, though, the trip was very hard. It was hot, sticky, and bug ridden, and I was soon thoroughly sunburned. Because I only spoke a little Spanish, the language barrier was challenging. Finally, I didn't always know exactly how to behave in many of the situations I encountered, such as the time I found myself in a high school Sunday school class in a church in Santa Cruz surrounded by Bolivian girls and boys my own age who only spoke Spanish.

That missions trip to Bolivia taught me many things. For one thing, I came face to face with the reality that literally billions of people around the world live on almost nothing. I couldn't believe the poverty I saw - mud huts, bare feet, villages without paving or even running water - and yet, these people were *happy*. In fact, the average person in Bolivia seemed to me to be happier than the average person in America. This made a big impression on me; who was I to complain about anything that I wanted but didn't have? I had everything and more! This trip also showed me the magnitude of the challenge we had in world missions. I was brought face to face with the poor and with the lost, and was both shamed and inspired.

After that hot, sticky, bug ridden, sunburned trip, though, I was no longer sure that I really wanted to be a missionary nurse; perhaps my calling was to stay in the United States and tell others here about Jesus, supporting missions through my prayers and tithes. Whatever I would do, I felt that spreading the gospel overseas was critically important, and I was sure that I would work to further this my whole life. This understanding was drilled into me every day while I grew up as we ministered to international students, prayed for missions overseas, and befriended missionaries.

Chapter 6: God and the Bible

The Foundation of our Lives

God was the most important thing in the world to my parents; they had two sole purposes in life, to serve God and to raise their children to serve God. Indeed, God was truly a part of every moment of our lives. We children grew up seeing Mom and Dad spend time reading their Bibles every morning and filling journals with their conversations with God, their thoughts and their fears.

We were also surrounded by scripture. Whenever there was a question, Mom and Dad looked to the Bible to see what God had to say about what God had to say about the issue. As children, we were taught to trust Dad as our spiritual authority, and Mom was our model in that. Dad leaned heavily on Pastor David's spiritual guidance, and his word carried a lot of weight in our house. Yet, at the same time, my parents also made a point of being independent of anyone else's interpretation of scripture or of God's will; we were taught that each person could understand the Bible for himself if he were open to the Holy Spirit's leading.

My parents told us that they didn't approve of the beliefs of either Catholics or liberal mainstream Christian denominations. This was because they felt that these branches of Christianity denied the Bible, Catholics by adding to it and trusting the Church over the Bible and liberal Christians by cutting the Bible to pieces and making it say whatever they wanted. We were taught that understanding the Bible is straightforward; if we read it with the understanding of the Holy Spirit, it would speak to us. We needed to take it on face value and believe what God said to us through it. If we had the

Bible, that was all we needed. Truly, the Bible was a real part of our lives. Even on a typical school day, it was woven all through our every moment, starting with the very beginning of the day.

"All right children," Mom said on a typical school morning. "It's time for Bible time. While you girls clean up the breakfast dishes, I'd like the boys to sit still and all of you to listen. And girls, clean up *quietly* as you listen to God's Word. Today we're reading from the book of Matthew."

We older ones had heard the story of the prodigal son many times before, but we sat still and listened to it once again. As Mom finished the chapter, she looked around and began asking questions as she usually did.

"Mercy, who does the father in this story stand for?" she asked.

"Um, I don't know," Mercy replied. She was one of the smaller ones at this time and didn't always listen.

"I know, Mom," Jeremiah offered.

"I want to see if Mercy knows," Mom said. She turned to Mercy and sought to help her remember. "Mercy, the father in the story let the son come back even though he had done bad things. Who is it that accepts us when we're sorry for doing bad things?"

"Oh, it's Jesus!" Mercy exclaimed, her face lighting up.

"That's right, Mercy," Mom said. "The father in this story stands for God." After a few more questions, it was time to move on with our day.

"Now children, who had a quiet time this morning?" Mom asked. "Ben, you didn't? Well, the rest of us are going to get started on our schoolwork; Ben, you need to go to your room and spend some time reading your Bible and talking with God. Next time try to remember to have your quiet time *before* breakfast.

And for the rest of you, it's time to start on your homework. Grace, I want you to come work with me on dictation."

Everyone set off to start on their day, and the smaller children played quietly while Mom sat at the table with Grace.

"All right Grace," Mom said. "I'm going to read some verses from the Bible out loud - I've got them here on index cards - and you're going to write them down word for word in your best penmanship as you hear them. Are you ready?"

About the time she finished reading the verses aloud to Grace, there was a commotion in the learning room and Jeremiah came running into the kitchen with Josiah close behind him. Josiah looked panic-stricken, and Jeremiah looked like a self-righteous judge.

"Mom," Jeremiah said as he reached her side. "Josiah had candy in his desk, and I saw it, and I know it's not his. He stole it from Ben, I know he did!"

"All right, let me see it," Mom said, and Jeremiah put the candy in her hand. "Josiah, is this your candy?" she asked.

"Um, no," Josiah replied, looking crestfallen.

"Whose is it?" Mom asked.

"It's Ben's," Josiah said, looking at his feet.

"And you took it?" Mom wanted to know.

"Yes."

"Do you know what that is called?"

"Stealing?" Josiah admitted glumly.

"That's right," Mom said. "Bring me all the candy and I'll put it aside for Ben when he finishes his quiet time. You know what happens when you do wrong, though, Josiah, don't you?"

"I get punished," Josiah replied.

"That's right," Mom affirmed.

Josiah brought the candy to the table and, as he did, Mom looked through her Bible. She finally stopped at a verse and

copied it down onto an index card. She gave the card to Josiah with instructions.

"Josiah, I want you to get some paper and copy down the verse on this card fifty times by hand," she said. "That will help you remember why we do not steal. Jesus is not happy with you when you steal, and if you keep stealing, someday it will lead to even worse things. Bring the paper to me when you're done so that I can inspect it."

Josiah went to his desk and got out some paper. He then proceeded to write out fifty times "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy, John 10:10." I remember getting this punishment on numerous occasions. The idea was that it was a punishment that would help us learn to do better in the future even as we spent precious time copying down words by hand. Usually, we didn't finish until long after our hands had become cramped. As a punishment, it truly worked.

This integration of God and the Bible into everything continued throughout every day. If a child was halfheartedly setting the table, he would be told to "do everything heartily, as unto the Lord and not unto man." When we fought with each other, Mom asked us if we were making Jesus happy, and when we got in trouble we were instructed to apologize to Jesus as well as to the sibling we had wronged. Children fighting at the table were told to imagine that Jesus was sitting between them, and we were continually instructed to strive to be more like Jesus. I simply cannot imagine a day at home without manifold mention of the Bible, God, and Jesus throughout it.

"It is bewildering that in a country where so many people claim to be Christians, society is so worldly and pagan," Dad told us children. "Part of the problem is that for many so-called Christians, God is just something they bring out on Sunday mornings and then put away and forget about for the rest

of the week. Our God, though, is so much more than that. Every detail of our lives matters to God, and we should allow every bit of our lives to be affected by him."

Mom and Dad clearly wanted to raise us children to love Jesus and base our lives on the Bible, and they did a good job of it. In addition to watching Mom and Dad's example as they lived every day with Jesus and the Bible, we children also went to a Bible club, took apologetics classes, listened to Christian radio shows, and read Christian literature.

We children attended AWANA (Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed, II Timothy 3:15), a weekly Bible club for children age three through high school. AWANA met every Wednesday night, and we loved it; the smallest children couldn't wait to turn three so that they could come too. We all had vests or uniforms for our groups and every year we each received a book with numerous Bible verses for memorization and activities to do. Each week we memorized Bible verses - Mom made this an official part of our school curricula - and then recited them at AWANA. At the end of the year, there was a ceremony at which children who had finished their books received awards, ribbons and trophies. AWANA also had also activities besides simply reciting Bible verses; each age group had a time of Bible teaching, a snack, and game time, which was held in the gym.

AWANA was very important to me and my siblings growing up. For one thing, it was an evening each week when we got to see most of our friends, who also attended AWANA, and it was thus one of our biggest opportunities for socialization. Also, we learned hundreds of Bible verses and came to know our Bibles backward and forward through AWANA. Learning God's Word in this way was extremely important to Mom and Dad as they sought to ground us in their Christian faith.

When I reached high school age, another opportunity for learning the Bible arrived. Mom and Dad placed a lot of importance on understanding what the Bible said, and they felt that the best way to do this was to go back to Greek and Hebrew, the original languages of the Bible. Dr. Kauk, a homeschool father in our community, was a professor of theology at Trinity Theological Seminary in Evansville. He knew Greek, Hebrew, and everything about apologetics. When Dr. Kauk offered to teach Greek to anyone who was interested, I was thrilled. I loved ancient languages, and the idea of my being able to read the Bible in its original language filled me with excitement and Mom and Dad with pride. And so, as a freshman in high school, I began to study New Testament Greek. I was not the only homeschool student who studied under Dr. Kauk, but I was the only one who truly stuck with it. For four long years, I spent countless hours learning Greek, and by the end of high school I could read the New Testament in its original language.

And yet, I was not content with Greek. I spent my last two years of high school studying Hebrew with Dr. Kauk as well. I found Hebrew much more difficult than Greek or Latin, but I spurred myself on with my desire to read the Old Testament in its original language. My ability at Hebrew never reached my ability in Greek or Latin, but I loved the challenge and what knowledge I did gain.

During my junior year in high school, Dr. Kauk also offered to teach an apologetics class for homeschoolers; eager to give us the tools to defend our faith, Mom and Dad signed Hannah, Ben, and I up. Apologetics met every Saturday morning after Greek and Hebrew lessons, and I loved it. Dr. Kauk, who had been a Southern Baptist minister before becoming a professor of theology, was well-trained in theology, and this was a time when

we could talk philosophy, discuss hard questions, and come to a better understanding of our Christian beliefs.

Through things like AWANA and apologetics classes, my parents made sure we could defend exactly what they believed about Christianity. Training us children to believe as they did and follow them in God's truth was critically important to my parents. They sent us to AWANA and apologetics courses because these things were run by people who shared their exact theological beliefs, and I grew up thinking that most Christians believed just as I had been taught to.

My parents also put a great importance on their own spiritual development. Dad went to a Promise Keepers conference in Washington D.C. one year, and Mom attended Bible Study Fellowship, an intensive women's Bible study program held at CFC. Mom and Dad also read a lot of Christian books as they sought to further develop their relationships with Christ.

Mom and Dad were big fans of James Dobson, who founded Focus on the Family in 1977. Focus on the Family reveals another important aspect of evangelical Christianity: the significance of the family. Evangelicals believe that God has ordered society into families, and that it is important for these families to function well; broken families result in hurt for all involved as well as a degradation in society. Focus on the Family's Mission Statement is "to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with as many people as possible by nurturing and defending the God-ordained institution of the family and promoting Biblical truths worldwide."⁵⁸ Focus on the Family puts importance on evangelism, the permanence of marriage, the value of children, the sanctity of life, and the importance of defining marriage as between one man and one

⁵⁸ Our Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles, Focus on the Family's official website, <http://www.focusonthefamily.com/aboutus/A000000408.cfm>, accessed April 2008.

woman. Focus on the Family offers numerous resources, books, conferences, and CDs to help families stay strong and assist parents in raising up their children to follow God. Mom and Dad put a lot of stock in what Focus on the Family said and did, and on the many books they bought from it. Focus on the Family is not alone, though: evangelical Christianity has many such organizations dedicated to serving God and the family.

In 1987, Focus on the Family created *Adventures in Odyssey*, a Christian radio drama for children. We children listened to it incessantly, and we knew practically all of its half-hour episodes by heart. By the time I was in high school, my family had collected over thirty albums of *Adventures in Odyssey* episodes. This radio drama taught children the importance of having a relationship with Christ, knowing the Bible, and obeying parents and those in authority. *Adventures in Odyssey* was an evangelical voice reaching out to children, and it was very influential in our lives.

Discussing apologetics as a family around the table at meals was also very common, most often on Sundays after church. We enjoyed thinking and talking things through together, looking at what the Bible said going to other sources. These conversations on theology often lasted for hours as we poured over the details of our faith, digging through our Bibles and reading famous Christian authors as we looked for answers.

Mom often read Christian devotional and apologetics books aloud to us during breakfast. She read C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* aloud to us when we were still in elementary school, and I, at least, understood every bit of it. Later, as we went on to middle school and high school, Mom read other apologetics books to us, books with titles like *You don't have to Check Your Brains at the Church Door* and *Thinking Christians*. These made a big impression on me growing up.

In all of these ways, my parents put a huge emphasis on passing their faith on to their children, teaching us to know the Bible and our theology, and to be able to give an answer when asked. Mom and Dad believed that only through Christianity would we find eternal salvation, and they were ready to do anything they could to make sure that their children followed them on this path.

My parents' evangelical Christian faith was influential in every area of their lives, and God was the most important thing in the world to them. There never seemed to be a question in their minds of God's existence or of the validity of the Bible, and they told us children that all learning, all research, all true philosophy, led straight to Christianity.

"Children, you don't ever have to check your brains at the church door," Dad told us time and again. "Remember that it is always important to challenge authority, even church authority, and to ask questions. Remember Martin Luther and, like him, never believe something just because someone told you to. You have the Bible and can read and understand it for yourself. Never ever be afraid of asking questions. As Christians, we don't have to be afraid of asking questions, because we have the truth. Many notable Christian theologians today started out as skeptics; Josh McDowell even tried to completely disprove Christianity before his conversion. Each one, though, when they looked at the evidence, were soon led to faith in Christ. No matter how many questions you ask, you will always be led back to Jesus."

PART 2:

FUNDAMENTALIST

Chapter 7: Standing Firm

A History of Fundamentalist Christianity

"Dad, why don't you like Aunt Lydia?"

"Why Rachel, I do like your Aunt Lydia," Dad assured me. "She's my sister. Whatever gave you the idea that I didn't?" It was the summer when I was thirteen, and we were visiting my grandparents' house in Massachusetts. Aunt Lydia, who was only seven years older than I, was spending the summer with her parents after finishing her sophomore year of college.

"Sometimes you act like you don't like her," I replied. "You looked annoyed with her last night like you thought she was doing something wrong."

"It is true that I don't agree with everything Lydia is doing or everything she believes," Dad answered thoughtfully.

"Why not?" I asked.

"Your Aunt Lydia has been brainwashed by the public school and university system into thinking like the world," Dad responded. "Rather than making the Bible first in her life, she has embraced secular humanism."

"But Aunt Lydia loves Jesus," I insisted. "She said so."

"Your Aunt Lydia is misguided," Dad said. "She doesn't understand the whole truth."

"And we do?" I asked.

"Yes, we do," Dad replied. "We have the Bible, and it is what shows us all truth. We don't need anything else. Does that make sense?"

"Yes," I answered.

"People like your Aunt Lydia, liberals like her, they want to question the Bible," Dad went on. "They question whether it is really the inspired Word of God, combing it for errors or

contradictions. They also reject the Biblical story of Creation as laid out in Genesis."

"Oh."

"And you should know, Rachel," Dad went on, "that this liberalism covers many other things as well. Your Aunt Lydia would like to expand the government's control and have it take care of the people, rather than the people taking care of themselves. This is socialistic and can border on communism."

"That's not good," I said.

"No," Dad affirmed. "And it is this liberal, secular humanist, atheistic mentality that controls our school systems today. That is part of the reason that we homeschool you; we don't want you to be brainwashed by the world. This country is going to hell in a hand basket, and we need to stand completely apart from that. We need to stand for truth."

My family was evangelical, yes, but we also had many characteristics of fundamentalists. As I pointed out previously, evangelicals, and Christians at large, faced a split in the decades surrounding the turn of the 20th century. There were liberal evangelicals focused on the social gospel and conservative evangelicals focused on saving souls. Some conservative evangelicals became militant and were known as fundamentalists. By 1930, their militancy had failed. After their failure, fundamentalists and other conservative evangelicals (the conservative evangelicals who had not become militant) were divided between separatist and inclusivist camps, and it was out of the inclusivist branch that the modern evangelical resurgence was born. In a way, the inclusivist camp has become the modern evangelical movement and fundamentalists today are now the offspring of the separatist camp. Again, though, fundamentalists today are still also evangelicals, and evangelicals today who are not fundamentalists often still bare

some of the traits of fundamentalists. My parents were a good example of the overlap between the two, being both very evangelical and very fundamentalist. I will now take a deeper look at the history of fundamentalism.

First, we need to define fundamentalism. Marsden writes that "A fundamentalist is an evangelical who is angry about something," and then goes on to clarify, stating that "fundamentalists are a subtype of evangelicals and militancy is crucial to their outlook."⁵⁹ When looking more specifically at the beliefs and practices of fundamentalists, though, we need a definition with more clarity. Nancy T. Ammerman, writing in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, a product of the Fundamentalist Project which was founded by the University of Chicago, states that North American Protestant fundamentalists have four defining characteristics: evangelism, inerrancy, premillennialism, and separatism.⁶⁰ A lot of fundamentalists today have rejected the term "fundamentalist" because of its negative connotations. For the purposes of this history and the story of my family, fundamentalists are not those who define themselves with that term but rather those who possess Ammerman's four characteristics.

In pre-modern Europe, Christianity was the dominant religion and the authority of the Church and the Bible was almost universally accepted. When the Protestant Reformation rejected the authority of the Church, Protestants clung instead to the authority of the Bible. Yet, while most Christians throughout history accepted the reliability of the Bible, the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy did not actually exist before the

⁵⁹ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 1.

⁶⁰ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 4-8.

last half of the 19th century;⁶¹ this was because until this time Christians had never needed to define such a doctrine. In the 18th century, the common simple acceptance of the Bible was about to change.

The 18th century Enlightenment, which was a period of great political, theological, and philosophical thought, changed much about the way man saw the world around him. As a result of the Enlightenment, "human reason replaced revelation" and "the western worldview ceased to revolve around religion."⁶² For Enlightenment philosophers believed that reason was the only way to find the truth, and they rejected revelation as naïve and mythical.⁶³ The secular rationalism resulting from the Enlightenment called into question many Christian assumptions, including even the Bible itself.

Theological liberalism rose as an attempt to bring Christianity in line with modern thinking. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Germany became the center of scholarship that critically examined the Bible. Friedrich Schleiermacher, who lived from 1768 to 1834, sought to examine Christianity "within the new parameters established by the Enlightenment." He said that Christianity was based primarily on feeling and that God "was an experience." In this way, whether Biblical miracles actually took place or whether the Bible was accurate in historic details became less important. Another prominent German scholar, Albrecht Ritschl, who lived from 1822 to 1889, saw Christianity as a spiritual and ethical community with a focus on social improvement rather than personal salvation or orthodoxy. In fact, Ritschl went so far as to deny the

⁶¹ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 15, and Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Origins of Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968), 13.

⁶² Mark Taylor Dalhouse, *An Island in the Lake of Fire* (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 12.

⁶³ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* (New York: The Random House Publishing Group, 2000), 73.

incarnation and resurrection of Christ. In questioning the original authorship, historical accuracy, and actual intended role of the Bible, these German scholars were practicing what was called "higher criticism." Scholars such as Schleiermacher and Ritschl were very influential in theological circles, and their liberal theology contributed to the "Social Gospel theology" of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁶⁴ This same time period saw the scientific acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution, a theory that would become very controversial.

Liberal, modernist Christians had no problem accepting higher criticism and evolution. They supported progress and modernization and felt that they needed to bring their faith in line with the changes in society. In fact, many of these more liberal Christians felt that, in Ammerman's words, "each of the inherited Christian beliefs deemed unsupportable in the light of modern science - the miracle stories, Jesus' bodily resurrection and virgin birth, the creation narratives - were to be taken as allegory, myth, symbol, but not as literal truth."⁶⁵ These liberal Christians were usually supporters of "social gospel theology," feeling strongly that they should be working to improve social conditions in America.

In contrast to this, conservative Christians felt threatened by the changes taking place around them, and saw themselves as defenders of the "purity of the faith" against upstarts rejecting God.⁶⁶ They rejected higher criticism and evolution, which they believed undermined the Bible and sought to eliminate God, and believed that they should focus on saving souls rather than on improving society. Underlying these views,

⁶⁴ The names, dates, and quotes in this paragraph come from page 13 of Dalhouse.

⁶⁵ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 13.

⁶⁶ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 14.

increasingly, were conservative Christians' beliefs in Biblical inerrancy and premillennialism.

The doctrine of inerrancy and Biblical literalism was first laid out and defended by theologians at Princeton Seminary throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was called the "Princeton Theology," and was created and defended by Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, Archibald Alexander Hodge, Benjamin B. Warfield, and J. Gresham Machen.⁶⁷ This doctrine held that "the Bible was verbally inspired and inerrant in its every reference, statistic, and quotation, when written down on the original autographs."⁶⁸ These theologians set about using reason to prove their doctrine of Biblical inerrancy, and their views had great influence on the beliefs of conservative Christians worried about the changes of society. The Princeton Theology was a reaction to higher criticism, and it represented, in Ammerman's words, "the nineteenth century's move from commonsense acceptance of the Bible's inspiration to a rational defense of it."⁶⁹

Another doctrine that had a great impact on many conservative Christians was premillennialism. John Nelson Darby, a British theologian who lived from 1800 to 1882, introduced dispensationalism into Christianity. Darby taught that the history of the earth was divided into different dispensations, or eras; the dispensation in which we now live, he said, is one in which the earth will become more and more sinful and evil and the persecution of Christians will grow. Darby's popularization of premillennialism, though, proved to be even more historically important than his introduction of dispensationalism. Darby said that the end of the world would be ushered in by a secret

⁶⁷ Sandeen, 12.

⁶⁸ Sandeen, 13.

⁶⁹ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 16.

"rapture," in which all Christians on earth would be transported instantaneously to heaven; this would then be followed by seven years of tribulation dominated by the antichrist and ending with the final return and victory of Christ.

Premillennialism was a new idea in the beginning of the 19th century, but it soon spread. The influence of Darby's theology in the United States became prevalent beginning around 1830,⁷⁰ and, in the years following the Civil War, Darby's beliefs became prominent.⁷¹ Darby himself traveled to the United States numerous times in the 1860s and 1870s, spreading his views across the country.⁷² For those Christians who were premillennialists, their lives were to focus inward on the personal preparation of the soul, rather than on reforming all of society. After all, premillennialists believed that society was doomed and would become worse regardless of what they did.⁷³ Of course, not everyone accepted premillennialism. Even as conservative Christians eagerly accepted premillennialism, moderate and liberal Christians were generally postmillennialists, believing that they could usher in Christ's return by improving society.⁷⁴

The events of the late 19th and early 20th centuries would divide Protestant Christianity into two groups, liberal and conservative. Interestingly, there are actually two different strains of conservative Protestant Christianity. According to Ammerman, "one branch of conservative Protestantism places primary emphasis on the historic creeds of the faith and membership in a church that confesses those beliefs...the other, much larger, branch of conservative Protestantism...identifies

⁷⁰ Gunn, 38.

⁷¹ El-Faizy, 59.

⁷² Sandeen, 10.

⁷³ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 17.

⁷⁴ Boyer, 99-100.

itself as 'evangelical.'"⁷⁵ Thus, whereas in the one case there is a strong emphasis on "covenant children" and church membership, there is, in the other case, a strong emphasis on personal, individual salvation. We are here only interested in the conservative evangelical section of Christianity (there were also some evangelicals who were liberal), because it gave rise to Christian fundamentalism. Fundamentalists were those conservative evangelicals who became militant, and they were especially likely to believe in inerrancy and premillennialism. From this point on, I will refer to these people as fundamentalists, but it is important to remember that not all conservative evangelicals, even if they shared many or all of their beliefs, were fundamentalists. This conflict was often seen in terms of "modernists verses fundamentalists" as liberal and moderate Christians accepted and embraced the changes in society and fundamentalists longed to have the world remain the same as it had been. Fundamentalism was, in many ways, a reaction against the great changes that had been taking place in society, a reaction against rationalism, higher criticism, evolution, and the perceived moral decay of modern society.

The fundamentalists were soon united by their revival meetings, missions organizations, Bible conferences, publications, and Bible institutes. Because they placed a great importance on saving souls, they were active in holding revivals that crossed denominational lines (personal salvation was held to be more important than denominational affiliation)⁷⁶ and sending missionaries out across the globe to convert the heathen.⁷⁷ They also held Bible and prophesy conferences, such as the extremely influential Niagara Bible Conference which met

⁷⁵ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 2.

⁷⁶ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 18.

⁷⁷ Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 12.

every summer from 1868 to 1900, which were important in sharing ideas such as Biblical inerrancy and premillennialism.⁷⁸ Fundamentalists were also united by the Bible institutes they began to form. Dwight L. Moody formed what would become Moody Bible Institute in 1886 and Lyman and Milton Stewart, two brothers who were oil millionaires, formed a Bible institute in Los Angeles in 1908 that would later be known as Biola University.⁷⁹ Then also, there were millennialist magazines and journals, and the Scofield Reference Bible, annotated with strong dispensationalist teaching, was published in 1909.⁸⁰ In these ways, fundamentalists were organizing.

Even as this organization was taking place, many of the mainstream denominations found themselves being torn apart beginning in the late 19th century by the conflict between liberals and conservatives within them. The Northern Baptists and the northern Presbyterians were most influenced by this growing controversy as clashes began over Biblical interpretations and theological views began, clashes that continued in the years leading up to World War I.⁸¹

While fundamentalists rejected Darwinian evolution and higher criticism of the Bible and accepted, at the same time, premillennialism and Biblical inerrancy, they lacked a unifying statement of doctrine and beliefs. That is, until Lyman Stewart became concerned about the attacks on the Bible and decided to use his money and influence to publish a series of booklets that would define the unified, unwavering "fundamentals" of Christianity. Though his brother Milton Stewart is also often connected with these booklets, they were, in reality, solely Lyman Stewart's project. Between 1910 and 1915, Stewart

⁷⁸ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 20.

⁷⁹ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 21.

⁸⁰ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 22.

⁸¹ Dahlhouse, 16.

published twelve booklets which he called *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth*.⁸²

Stewart arranged for prominent conservative theologians of his day to write the five to nine chapters in each booklet; these chapters bore titles like "The Virgin Birth of Christ," "Fallacies of the Higher Criticism," "Justification by Faith," "The Inspiration of the Bible - Definition, Extent and Proof," "Christianity, No Fable," "The Certainty and Importance of the Bodily Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead," "The Passing of Evolution," and "The Coming of Christ."⁸³

The Fundamentals, which were written from a dispensationalist, premillennialist perspective, attacked evolution and higher criticism while affirming the fundamentals of Christianity, such as the virgin birth, deity, and resurrection of Christ, salvation by faith, and the inerrancy of the Bible. In addition to evolution and higher criticism, *The Fundamentals* attacked Marxism, liberal theology, Catholicism, Mormonism, Christian Science, spiritualism, atheism, socialism, and modern philosophy. A total of three million copies of *The Fundamentals* were distributed to pastors, students, missionaries, and professors.⁸⁴

In 1920 at a Baptist Conference in Buffalo, New York, the term "fundamentalist" was used for the first time. Curtis Laws, the editor of the *Watchman-Examiner*, a national weekly Baptist publication, suggested "that a new word be adopted to describe the men among us...we suggest that those who still cling to the great fundamentals of the faith...be called 'Fundamentalists.'"⁸⁵ This term was soon widely used. Unfortunately, though, Stewart did not succeed in unifying all Christians behind what he

⁸² Gunn, 92.

⁸³ Gunn, 181-188.

⁸⁴ Dahlhouse, 17.

⁸⁵ Dahlhouse, 18.

considered the "fundamentals of Christianity." Instead, there was by the 1920s a clear divide between fundamentalist Christians and other, more liberal, Christians.⁸⁶

Along with publishing *The Fundamentals*, Stewart was also a strong supporter of the Jewish people. He paid for the publication of William Blackstone's 1886 Zionist book, *Jesus is Coming*.⁸⁷ Blackstone was an early Christian Zionist who taught that end times would not come until the Jews again had their own nation, and his book was long one of the nation's most popular books on prophecy.⁸⁸ Blackstone, along with many other fundamentalists, believed that the fate of all mankind was connected to that of the Jews.

Fundamentalists now had a set of unifying beliefs and positions as well as a name. By the 1920s, full blown conflict had erupted between modernists and fundamentalists.⁸⁹ World War I brought into question the optimistic, postmillennialist hopes of liberal Christians and seemed to confirm fundamentalists' premillennialism beliefs.⁹⁰ The war brought to mind images of the end of the world, and fundamentalists linked League of Nations to the coming of the antichrist.⁹¹ Following World War I, modernization continued with the coming of the "Roaring Twenties;" young people questioned social norms and there was an increase in consumerism as new clothing styles, art, and music appeared.⁹² Fundamentalists linked the perceived social decay of the 1920s with the acceptance of the theory of evolution.⁹³ In addition, fundamentalists received a boost in public support by

⁸⁶ Gunn, 94.

⁸⁷ Gunn, 56.

⁸⁸ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 22.

⁸⁹ Ferenc Morton Szasz, *The Divided Mind of Protestant America, 1880 - 1930* (University, AL: The University of Alabama Press, 1982), xi.

⁹⁰ Armstrong, 171; Szasz, 85.

⁹¹ Armstrong, 171.

⁹² Gunn, 104.

⁹³ Gunn, 103-4.

connecting German aggression in World War I to presumed German acceptance of evolution and the role of Germany in the development of higher criticism⁹⁴ and by connecting the 1917 Soviet revolution in Russia with the worldview resulting from the theory of evolution.

The battle lines were drawn. Fundamentalists soon found themselves fighting on two fronts as they battled against liberalism in their denominations and the teaching of evolution in schools.⁹⁵ The focus in both of these movements was the protection of the Bible against the attacks of higher criticism and evolution. They believed that Christianity itself was at stake.

Fundamentalists fought the theory of evolution in pamphlets, books, and public debates, and soon began the battle against the teaching of evolution in schools.⁹⁶ William Jennings Bryan, a popular politician and well-known fundamentalist, began a crusade against the teaching of evolution in public schools, giving lectures across the country from 1921 to 1924.⁹⁷ Over the next few years, anti-evolutionism became a national fad as people became convinced that "the future of civilization depended on banishing this atheistic and harmful dogma from the schools."⁹⁸ Fundamentalists were reacting to huge societal changes and a perceived moral decline, and many people shared their fears. Soon, state after state began to ban the teaching of evolution in public schools.⁹⁹

In 1925, what is now called the "Scopes Monkey Trial" took place in Tennessee; John Scopes was on trial for violating state law by teaching evolution to his public school students. Bryan

⁹⁴ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 26.

⁹⁵ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 6.

⁹⁶ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 6.

⁹⁷ Gunn, 102.

⁹⁸ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 26.

⁹⁹ Gunn, 40.

himself argued for the state while Clarence Darrow of the ACLU argued on behalf of the defendant.¹⁰⁰ John Scopes was found guilty, but the trial, which gained nationwide attention and was broadcast via radio,¹⁰¹ made Bryan and other fundamentalists look foolish and backward.¹⁰² Suddenly, fundamentalists were perceived as "enemies of science and intellectual liberty."¹⁰³ This marked a turning point for fundamentalism as it lost its place as a nationally influential coalition.¹⁰⁴

Fundamentalists, meanwhile, were also losing their battle with liberals within their denominations. Some denominations, such as the Congregationalists, were so dominated by liberals that there was no conflict, while others, like southern Presbyterians and Southern Baptists, were so dominated by conservatives that no argument took place. The northern Presbyterians and Northern Baptists, though, were a mixed bag that resulted in huge upheaval as liberals and conservatives tore the denominations apart.¹⁰⁵ After the Scopes trial in 1925, the tide turned against the fundamentalists,¹⁰⁶ and by 1930 the liberals were the clear victors in both of the denominations.¹⁰⁷

Facing complete defeat, the fundamentalists retreated but did not disappear; instead, they reorganized and began to form a substantial counterculture that would eventually rise and become nationally influential again many years later. This time of counterculture and mobilization lasted from 1925 to 1975, a period of fifty years.¹⁰⁸ In the years following their defeat, many fundamentalists formed their own denominations or

¹⁰⁰ Gunn, 105.

¹⁰¹ Gunn, 103.

¹⁰² Armstrong, 177.

¹⁰³ Armstrong, 177.

¹⁰⁴ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 6.

¹⁰⁵ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 24.

¹⁰⁶ Armstrong, 177.

¹⁰⁷ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 25; Szasz, 98-99.

¹⁰⁸ Armstrong, v.

independent churches, withdrawing from liberal denominations in order to focus on the fundamentals of true Christianity and hold fast to their belief in premillennialism and inerrancy.¹⁰⁹ Fundamentalists had been coming together for conferences and revivals for decades, and they were now connected by organizations based on missions and evangelism.¹¹⁰ They were also linked by the Bible institutes that continued to grow and multiply and by fundamentalist publishing and literature that proliferated during this time.¹¹¹

Fundamentalism offered fulfilling answers to the many questions in life and provided community and fellowship and a stable rock in the midst of a changing society. Yet, in the years following 1930, fundamentalists were not completely united. Rather, they were split between two camps, separatist and inclusivist.¹¹² Separatist fundamentalists were convinced that American society was under the control of anti-Christian influences, adhering to beliefs that rejected God and glorified "progress and human goodness."¹¹³ Separatist fundamentalists pulled out of modern society, which they perceived as evil; they believed that, because the world would only become worse until the end times, there was nothing they could do about the deteriorating conditions of the society around them except remain pure and do their best to convert individual souls. Some fundamentalists, along with other conservative evangelicals, were inclusivists; they believed that they should work together with other Christians in spite of their differences in an effort to bring about spiritual revival. Nowhere is the difference

¹⁰⁹ Marden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 66.

¹¹⁰ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 31.

¹¹¹ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 32-3.

¹¹² Marden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 66-7.

¹¹³ Ammerman, "North American Protestant Fundamentalism," 28.